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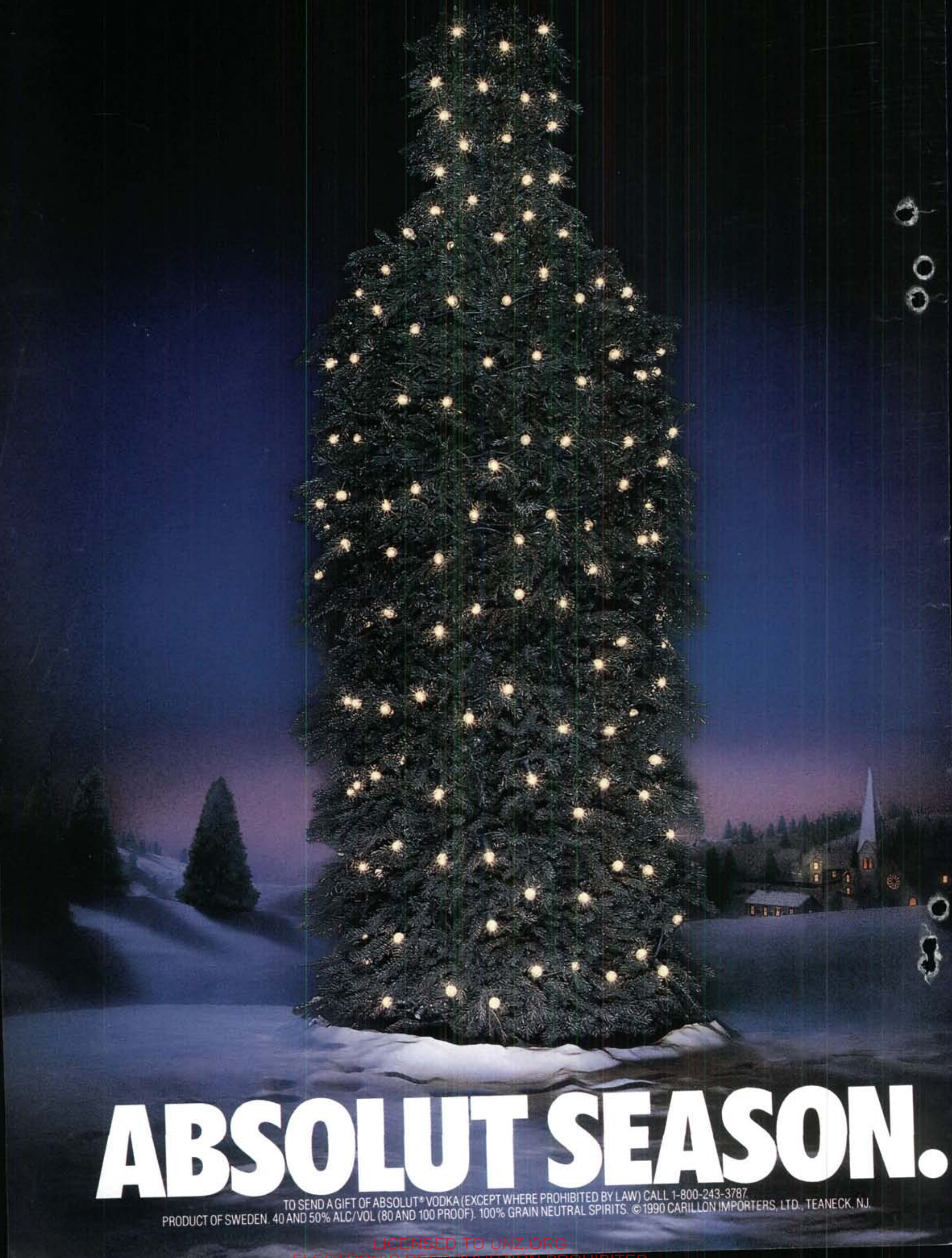
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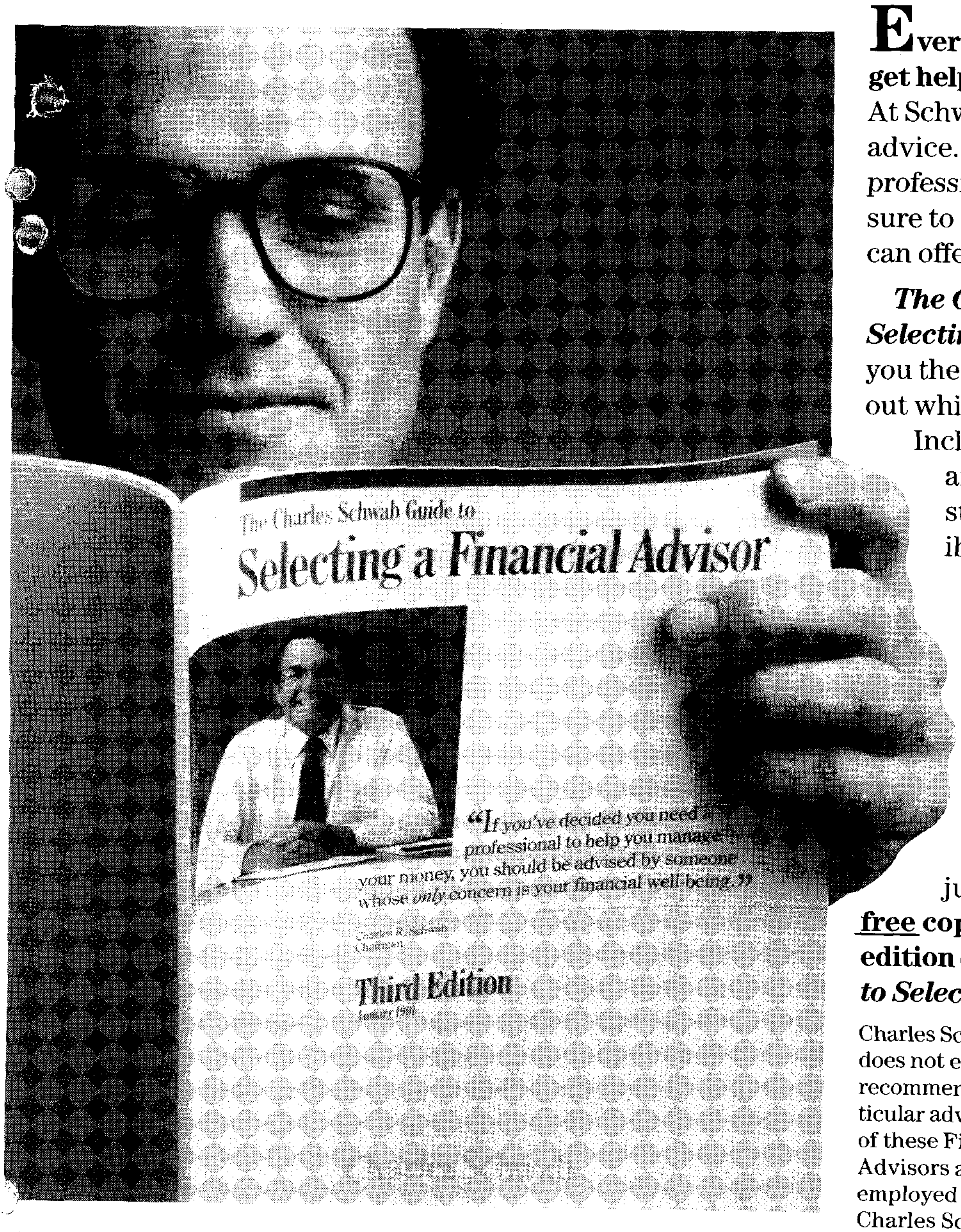
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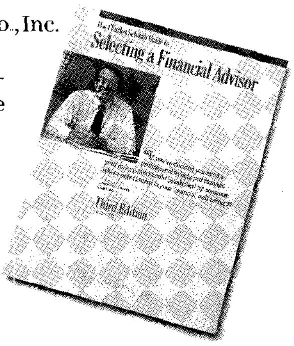
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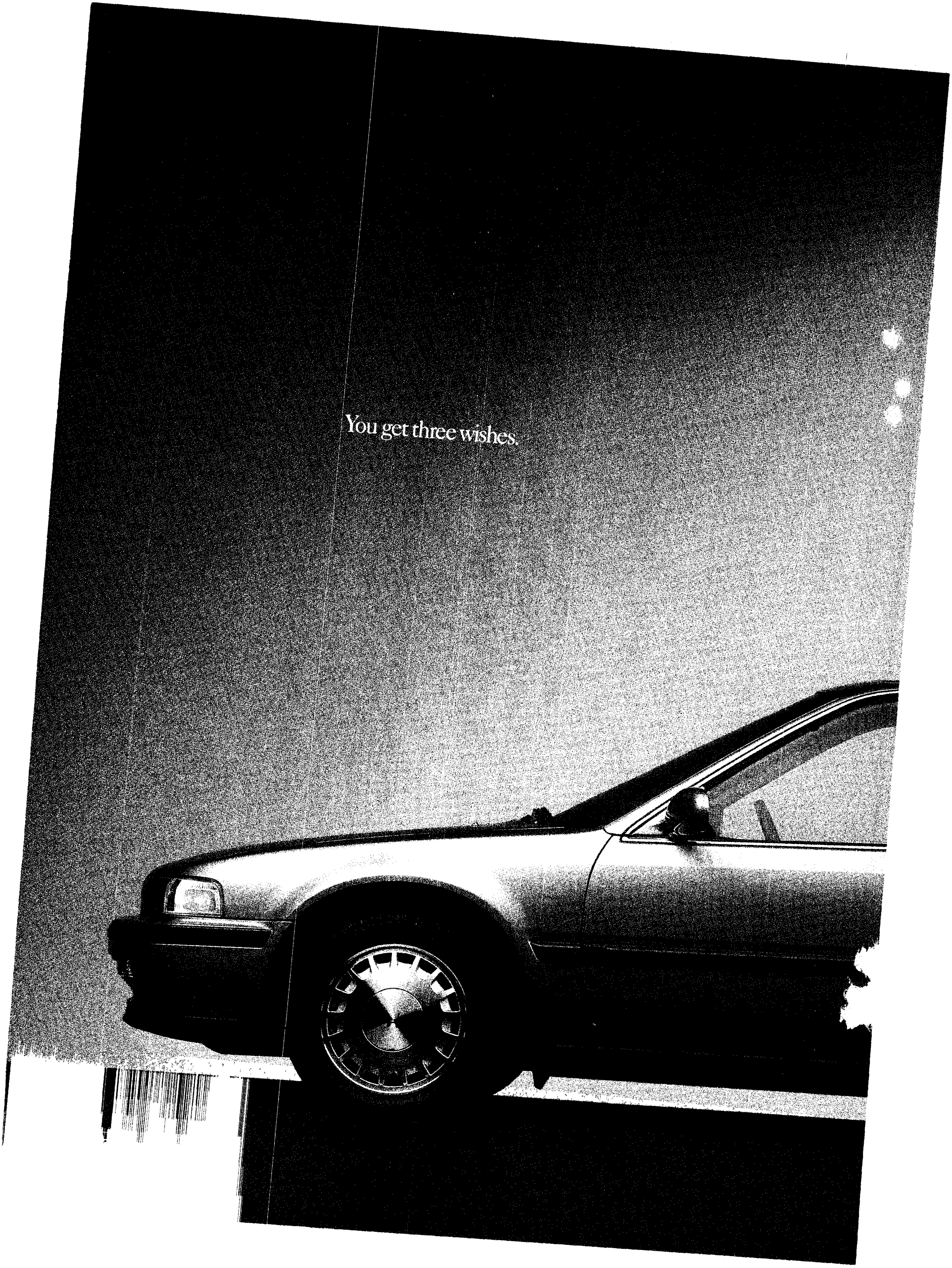
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

THERE'S been no end, lately, of tributes to Cole Porter, in preparation for the centennial (next June 9) of his birth. But while 'tis the year for Porter, 'tis the season for Rodgers and Hammerstein. It is generally easier, that is, to sell young carollers gathered round the grand on the charms of "Getting to Know You" than to explicate the innuendos of "Let's Do It." And it's particularly easy when the manual at hand is "Rodgers & Hammerstein Rediscovered," which was just published by Williamson Music. In his introduction to the volume, Theodore S. Chapin, executive director of Rodgers & Hammerstein, provides some background on each of its eleven selections, and sets forth the project's purpose: "To revisit some of the songs written along [Rodgers and Hammerstein's] seventeen-year collaboration which haven't received the attention of the well-known others."

We called up Mr. Chapin for elaboration. He began by reminding us that all the songs had been published before, in one form or another. "The thrust of the book is, if the two men published them, they must have liked them. And don't forget that some of the numbers were even used in some fashion. 'My Girl Back Home,' for example, was dropped from 'South Pacific' on stage, but made it into the movie." When asked why the latter show crops up most frequently in the compilation, Mr. Chapin answered at length, emphasizing that "South Pacific" has not become dated. "People think it's about World War Two, but really it's about prejudice—the war is the background." Thinking that "Flower Drum Song," represented in the songbook by "My Best Love," may not have aged as well, we asked whether it would be difficult to mount a full-scale revival of it in the current climate. "It's always done somewhere every year, in some school or community playhouse," he replied. "And Wayne Wang has dreamed of making a new movie of it someday. But it's an oddball." It's even stranger, we remarked, that Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote only one bona-fide song for the holiday season: "Happy Christmas, Little Friend," included here, of course. "Not really," Mr. Chapin argued. "They worked best when they had real characters and situations to respond to. They weren't the type of team to whom you could say, 'Hey, write us a Christmas song.' "

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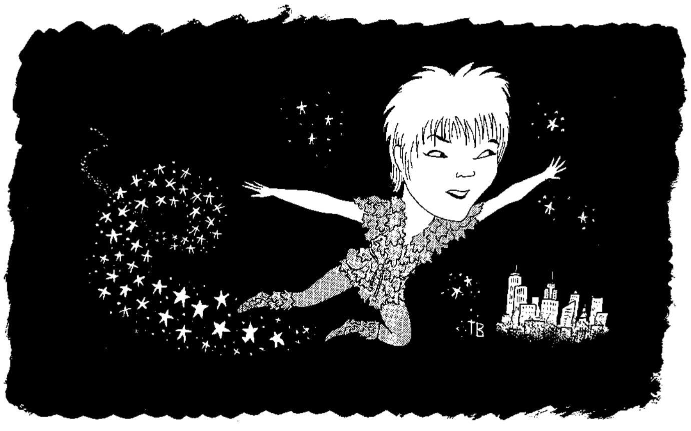
16	17	18	19			

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

The Acting Company—A brief engagement by the group that John Houseman founded. Two of Shakespeare's plays will be presented. **THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA,** directed by Charles Newell. Dec. 10 and Dec. 15. . . . **ROMEO AND JULIET,** directed by Leon Rubin. Dec. 12-13. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980.)

The American Plan—A new play by Richard Greenberg, with Joan Copeland, Yvette Hawkins, D. W. Moffett, Wendy Makkena, and Jonathan Walker. Previews through Dec. 15. Opens Dec. 16 at 7. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)



Cathy Rigby in "Peter Pan"

The Big Funk—A new play written and directed by John Patrick Shanley. Opens Dec. 10 at 7:30. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Circle Repertory Company—Presenting **LOVE DIATRIBE,** by Harry Kondoleon. Previews through Dec. 16. Opens Dec. 18 at 8. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Peter Pan—Cathy Rigby has the title role in a production of the 1954 musical. Previews Dec. 11-12. Opens Dec. 13 at 6:15, and runs through Jan. 20. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 246-0102.)

Romeo and Juliet—Robert Sean Leonard and Gerit Quealy star in this Riverside Shakespeare Company production. Preview on Dec. 12. Opens Dec. 13 at 8. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Township Fever—Mbongeni Ngema's new South African musical. Previews through Dec. 18. Opens Dec. 19 at 8. (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100.)

RECENTLY OPENED

Aspects of Love—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story—Anyone who thinks that rock and roll lives on had better steer clear of this ersatz docu-musical about the life of Buddy Holly. (11/19/90) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Camille, A Tearjerker—Everett Quinton and the late Charles Ludlam are both at their best in this revival of Mr. Ludlam's 1973 spoof, which gives Mr. Quinton a chance to "play the whore" on a grand scale. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

Carnal Knowledge—That yesterday's cutting-edge social commentary turns up as today's after-school special seems the only conclusion to be drawn from this brat-pack production of the Jules Feiffer play on which Mike Nichols based the 1971 movie. With Judd Nelson, Justine Bateman, and Jon Cryer (in the roles created by Jack Nicholson, Candice Bergen, and Art Garfunkel); directed by Martin Charnin. (12/10/90) (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

The Caucasian Chalk Circle—Brecht's play, adapted by Thulani Davis from a translation by William Spiegelberger and directed by George C. Wolfe. With Charlayne Woodard, Reggie Montgomery, Novella Nelson, and Kevin Jackson, among others. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. [illegible]8-7150.)

Club XII—A musical adaptation of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" by Rob Hanning, Randy Weiner, and Sasha Lew[illegible] With M.C. Lyte and D'Atra Hicks. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 764-7946. Closes Dec. 15.)

Daugherty & Field Off-Broadway—The cabaret team of Bill Daugherty and Robin Field in a revue of swing and show tunes. (Double Image Theatre, 15 Vandam St. 924-1120.)

Falsettoland—This latest installment of a three-part cantata by William Finn (music and lyrics) is a sequel to "In Trousers" and "March of the Falsettos." Mr. Finn's story presents a number of new elements (among them a Bar Mitzvah in the hospital room of a man who is dying of AIDS) before dissolving in its own syrup. The music sounds agreeable enough, and the performance goes smoothly, under the direction of James Lapine. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Fiddler on the Roof—Topol, the Israeli actor, makes a commanding Tevye, the best of all of them, in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and direction are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the originals by Patricia Zipprodt. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

Forever Plaid—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

I Stand Before You Naked—A new play by Joyce Carol Oates. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

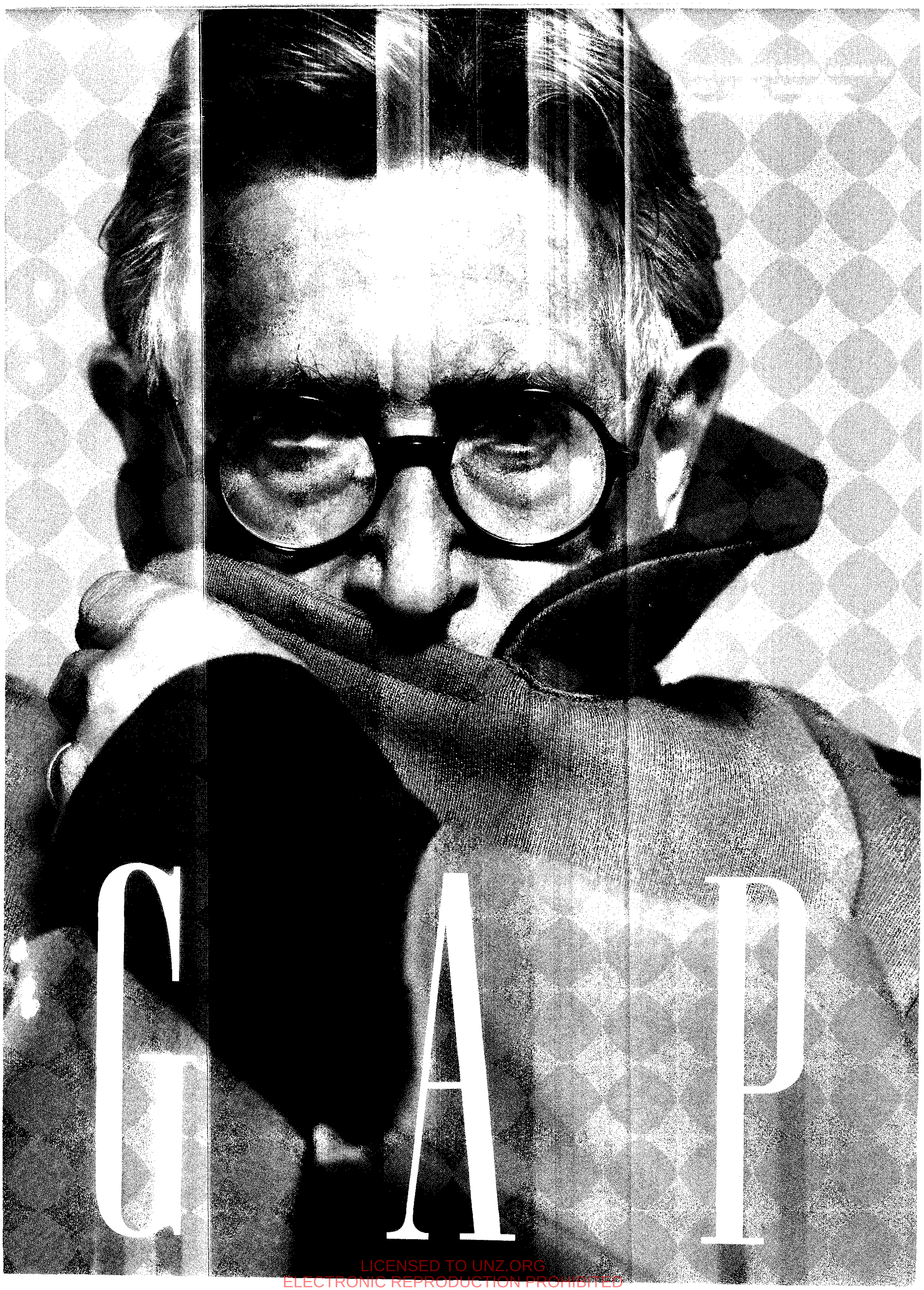
Jackie Mason: Brand New—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting two plays in rotating repertory: Ibsen's **WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN** and Cocteau's **INFERNAL MACHINE.** (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

King Lear—Hal Holbrook's King is a benig[illegible] and rather merry monarch to start with, and he is shattered, his innocence destroyed, by one dreadful happening after another. It[illegible]s an odd reading of the role, but Mr. Holbro[illegible]k makes it credible. He does this almost una[illegible]ed; only Ron Randell as Gloucester is fit company for him. (12/3/90) (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes Dec. 16.)

Lake No Bottom—The characters in Michael Weller's comedy are an eminent critic, now retired to his lakeside estate; his charming wife; and a suddenly successful novelist who was once her lover. There is not much in the way of plot but quite a lot in the way of fun as the *ménage* quickly becomes *à trois*, and as the actors perform with spirit and relish. Marsha Mason is a star in a star's role, and she is supported (and then some) by Daniel Davis, as her husband, and Robert Knepper, as her lover. Carole Rothman directed, and Adrianne Lobel designed the stylish settings. (12/10/90) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes Dec. 23.)

Lambs Theatre Company—The seventh annual presentation of **THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI,** a musical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adapted from two O. Henry stories. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Closes Dec. 30.)

Lettice & Lovage—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers, in Peter Shaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 23.)

Love and Anger—A comedy by the Canadian playwright George F. Walker. Presented by New York Theatre Workshop. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200.)

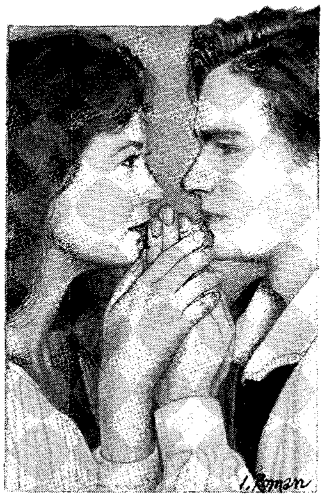
The Lunatic, the Lover & the Poet—Brian Bedford's one-man Shakespeare show. (Mazur Theatre, 555 E. 90th St. 534-5366. Closes Dec. 16.)

The Miser—This tiresome, simpleminded, infantile revival of the Molière classic is an almost total washout saved from ignominy only by a dashing comic turn by John Christopher Jones. The director, Stephen Porter, would seem to have found for the divine Philip Bosco a part he can do nothing with. (10/29/90) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 31.)

Monster in a Box—Spalding Gray's latest autobiographical monologue. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Nightingale—A play about Florence N. by Elizabeth Diggs. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Dec. 23.)

Oh, Kay!—A joyous revival of a musical originally done here in 1926, this time with an all-black (all-gifted) company. The score, by George Gershwin, with lyrics by Ira Gershwin, and the singing and nimble dancing of the whole company are so glorious that they nearly compensate for the damnable din of amplification. With Brian Mitchell and Angela Teek as the romantic leads, and with fleet-footed Gregg Burge, Kevin Ramsey, and Stanley Wayne Mathis as the principal dancers. (11/12/90) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)



Gerit Quealy and Robert Sean Leonard in "Romeo and Juliet"

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Piano Lesson—August Wilson's newest drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh, in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes. Lloyd Richards was the director. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Prelude to a Kiss—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Ashley Crow is the bride, and John Dossett is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

Remembrance—Aideen O'Kelly in a play by Graham Reid. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

The Rothschilds—The 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book). (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

The Seagull: The Hamptons: 1990—An adaptation of the Chekhov classic. (RAPP Arts Center, 220 E. 4th St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 30.)

Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll—All manner of hypocrites, fakes, liars, and other ethical discards are subjected to Eric Bogosian's incomparable mimicry and wit. The evening is anything but depressing. *Performances resume Dec. 14 and will continue through Jan. 6.* (2/26/90) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Shadowlands—William Nicholson's vulgar stage adaptation of the beautiful television film that he wrote for the BBC about C[illegible] Lewis is essentially a tourist trap. It Broadwayizes everything that, in the movie, was subtle or sincere. Directed by Elijah Moshinsky; with Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Alexander. (11/26/90) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

Shogun: The Musical—Or "James Clavell's Shogun: The Musical," to give credit where credit is due, is a real hoot. It has a shipwreck sequence, a lightning effect, an entire number performed on a treadmill, a slow-motion sequence, a gunshot, an earthquake, a rainstorm, a snowstorm, a cavalry charge, a Ninja raid, a haiku competition, and a song about sex paraphernalia, and it begins with two half-naked men banging on drums. What more do you want? (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.)

Six Degrees of Separation—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect

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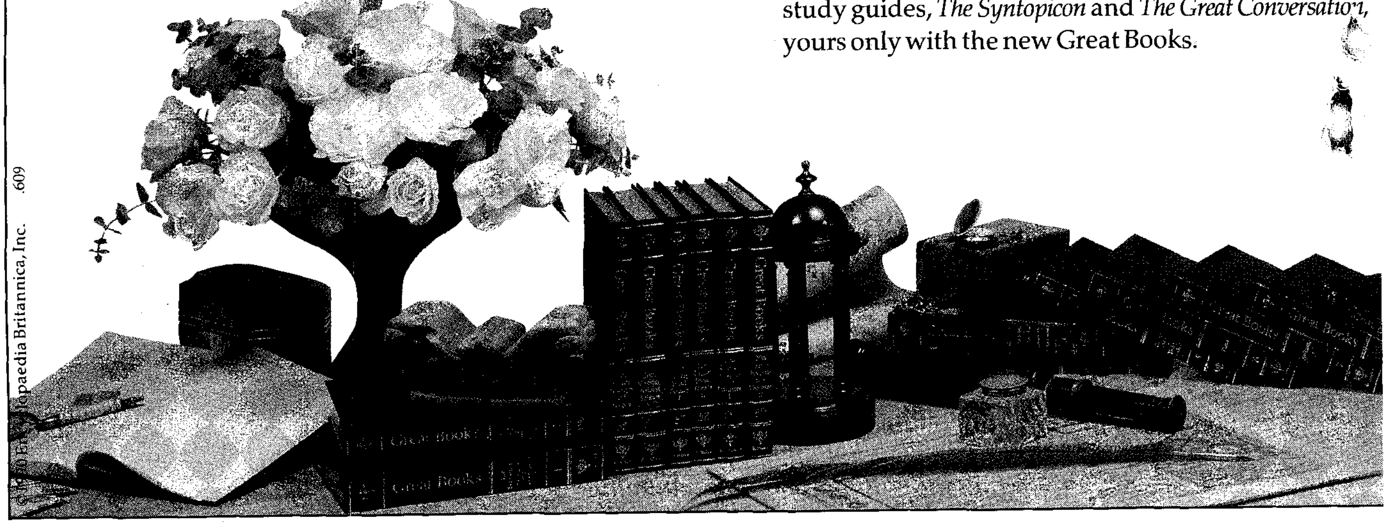

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meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (6/25/90) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

THE SUM OF US—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed; but cast and direction are both excellent, and Tony Goldwyn is electrifying as a young homosexual who wishes his father weren't quite so laid back about his homosexuality. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

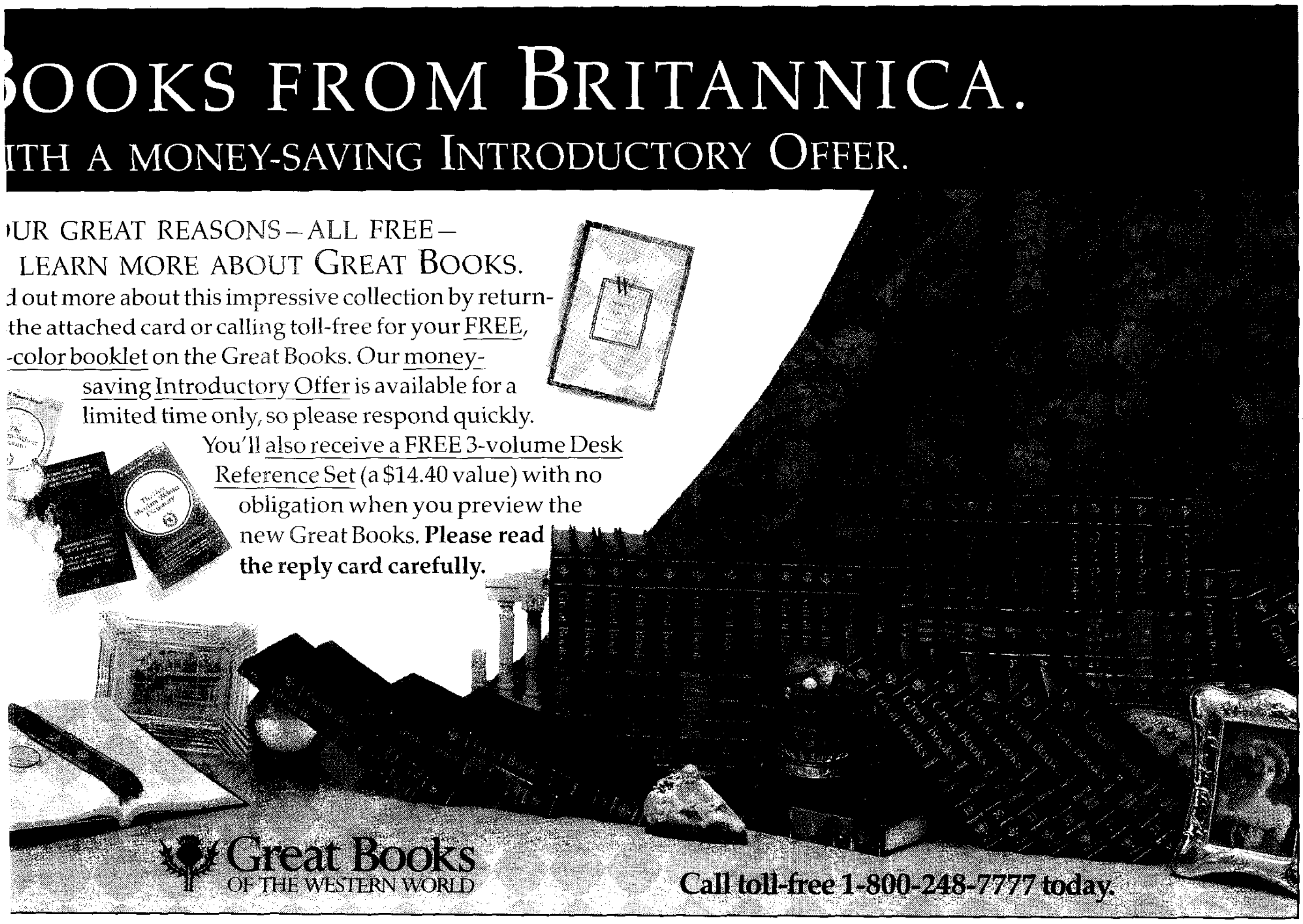
THOSE WERE THE DAYS—One could almost wish that this tribute to the Yiddish musical theatre, directed and choreographed by Eleanor Reissa, were less assimilated—stricter in its concept and selection (witness the title song, which has nothing to do with the Yiddish musical theatre). But the charming and adept performances of Bruce Adler, Robert Abelson, Mina Bern, and Lori Wilner, together with Zalmen Mlotek's klezmer music, make the show a joyful celebration of the shtetl culture, and put it among the very best of its kind. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302.)

VILLAGERS—A play written by John Francis Istel. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 16.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while La Vern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . .

CITY OF ANGELS: Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular setting and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirtieth birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **A FEW GOOD MEN:** "Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series. Directed by Don Scardino. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **GYPSY:** This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



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DANCE

THE annual "Christmas Spectacular" at Radio City Music Hall is professional entertainment—an intermissionless hour and a half so slickly paced that you keep thinking there's going to be a commercial break any minute now. It's the sort of show that some people associate with New York as a glamorous Babylon. And is that such a bad thing? As Babylon theatre goes, this year's edition has much to recommend it: it's lively, it's chic, it's spectacular, it has touches of wit, the music is stylish, and the sound system is being worked by individuals who still cherish the nuances of hearing. Furthermore, it has the right priorities: the show's culminating act, and its theatrical climax, is Leon Leonidoff's fifty-seven-year-old number, "The Living Nativity," with a sumptuous procession of figures (real camels, sheep, and donkeys among them) marching toward a life-size crèche in a carefully timed and entirely unironical pavane.

The production has a special poignance this year owing to the recent death, at age ninety-one, of Russell Markert, who founded a women's precision-dance team in 1925 called the Missouri Rockets. In time, it moved to New York and became the Roxyettes, then, in 1932, with the opening of Radio City, the Rockettes. Nothing in "The Christmas Spectacular" surpasses the Rockettes in their traditional "Wooden Soldiers" number, with its painstaking domino fall for the kick line. The whole show stops dead, and the action seems to take place at dream speed. Still, our personal favorite came during "The Carol of the Bells," new this year. On the back of each Rockette is a golden xylophone. This is played with mallets by the Rockette standing behind her, whose back is played by the one behind *her*, and so on. It reminded us of the time we witnessed a balletgoer at the Met become so enraged over the chatter of the patron in the seat ahead of him that he smartly rapped the offender between the shoulder blades with a rolled-up program. At Radio City, of course, patrons do not exhibit such rude behavior. As the house press release puts it, "The Rockettes début dazzling new costumes and striking new choreography while audiences listen and watch in wonder."

New York City Ballet—Performances of "The Nutcracker" are being presented through Jan. 6. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Dec. 11-13 at 6; Dec. 14 at 8; Dec. 15 at 2 and 8; Dec. 16 at 1 and 5; and Dec. 18-19 at 6. The season continues through Feb. 24.)

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre—Dec. 11 at 8: "Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot," "Forgotten Time" (company première), and "The Stack-Up." . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 8: "Hidden Rites," "Masekela Langage," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 8: "Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot," "Impinyuza" (company première), and "Shards." . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 8: "Blues Suite," "Cry," "Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 2: "Landscape," "Hidden Rites," and "Suite Otis." . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 8: "Blues Suite," "Forgotten Time," and "Shards." . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 3: "Night Creature," "Reflections in D," "Vespers," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 8: "Memoria," "Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder," and "Shards." . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 8: "Landscape," "Games" (company première), and "Shards." . . . ¶ Dec. 19 at 8: "Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot," "Forgotten Time," "Suite Otis," and "Read Matthew 11:28." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through Dec. 30.)

Pilobolus—Opening performances of a four-week engagement that will run through Jan. 6. Dec. 11 at 8: "The Particle Zoo" (New York première), "Moonblind," "Televisitation," and "Debut C." . . . ¶ Dec. 12-14 at 8 and Dec. 16 at 7:30: "Ciona," "Axones" (New York première), "Shizen," solo from "The Empty Suitor," and "Land's Edge." . . . ¶ Dec. 15 and Dec. 19 at 8, and Dec. 16 at 2: "The Particle Zoo," "Moonblind," "Clandestiny" (New York première), "Pseudopodia," and "Untitled." . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 8: "Molly's Not Dead," "Pseudopodia," "Televisitation," and "Debut C." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

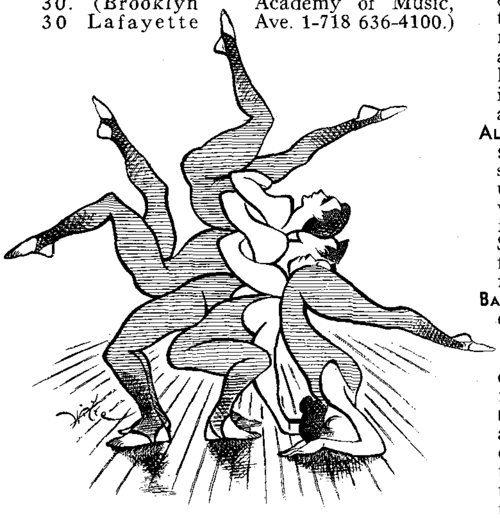
"The Christmas Spectacular"—Radio City Music Hall's annual Yuletide show runs through Jan. 3. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

David Dorfman—With his company in "Area of Detail," a program of new and repertory works. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Dec. 13-17 at 8.)

Urban Bush Women—In a program of repertory works, including "I Don't Know, But I've Been Told, If You Keep on Dancin' You'll Never Grow," "Lipstick . . . A Doowop Drama," and "Shelter." (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7100. Dec. 13 at 7:30, a benefit performance; Dec. 14-15 at 8; and Dec. 16 at 3.)

Pat Cannon and the Foot & Fiddle Dance Company—Four dancers and three musicians in a program of clogging, tap, and Western swing. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. Dec. 14-16 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-5060.)

Bolshoi Ballet Grigorovich Company—The New York début of a sixty-member Soviet troupe including students from the Bolshoi Academy, as well as members of the Bolshoi Ballet. The company is presenting "The Nutcracker." The first performance is Dec. 19 at 7; the engagement runs through Dec. 30. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)



Pilobolus

NIGHT LIFE

THE other week we attended a Planned Parenthood benefit at Wetlands. We went for the obvious reason—Planned Parenthood can have our thirty dollars any time—but also because the Indigo Girls were playing and we've been thinking about them a lot lately. In the past, we've had some minor reservations about the Georgia-based duo, which is neo-something-or-other and plays ardent, hyperliterate folk that reminds us of Simon and Garfunkel. Still, we've been meditating on the Indigo Girls because they lost the 1989 "Best New Artist" Grammy by as little as a hair extension. (The other runners-up for the award, which was given to Milli Vanilli and then taken away again, were Neneh Cherry, Tone Lōc, and Soul II Soul.)

Before the duo's set at Wetlands, we hung around downstairs. The club's lower level consists of a hallway decorated with seventies-ish black-light posters—the kind our sister had in high school—and a relatively quiet, smoke-free bar. We had a drink, ran into someone who just *had* to tell us about his new Led Zeppelin boxed set, excused ourselves, and went upstairs to hear the Indigo Girls. Wetlands whose raison d'être is good music and earnestness, is the perfect place to hear the pair. They quickly made [illegible] ashamed that we had ever had any doubts about their albums, or anything else for that matter. The crowd, swaying in front of the club's giant Summer-of-Love mural, sang along to the duo's first hit, "Closer to Fine," and occasionally did some kind-spirited heckling, like "Amy, I want to take care of your kittens!" In general, the evening, which also included topnotch performances by Joan Osborne, among others, seemed designed to entertain the troops rather than to preach to the converted. (O.K., we *did* get handed some condoms on the way out.) "Does everybody know why they're here and stuff?" Amy Ray asked the crowd near the end of the set. Cheers. "Cool. I figured you did."

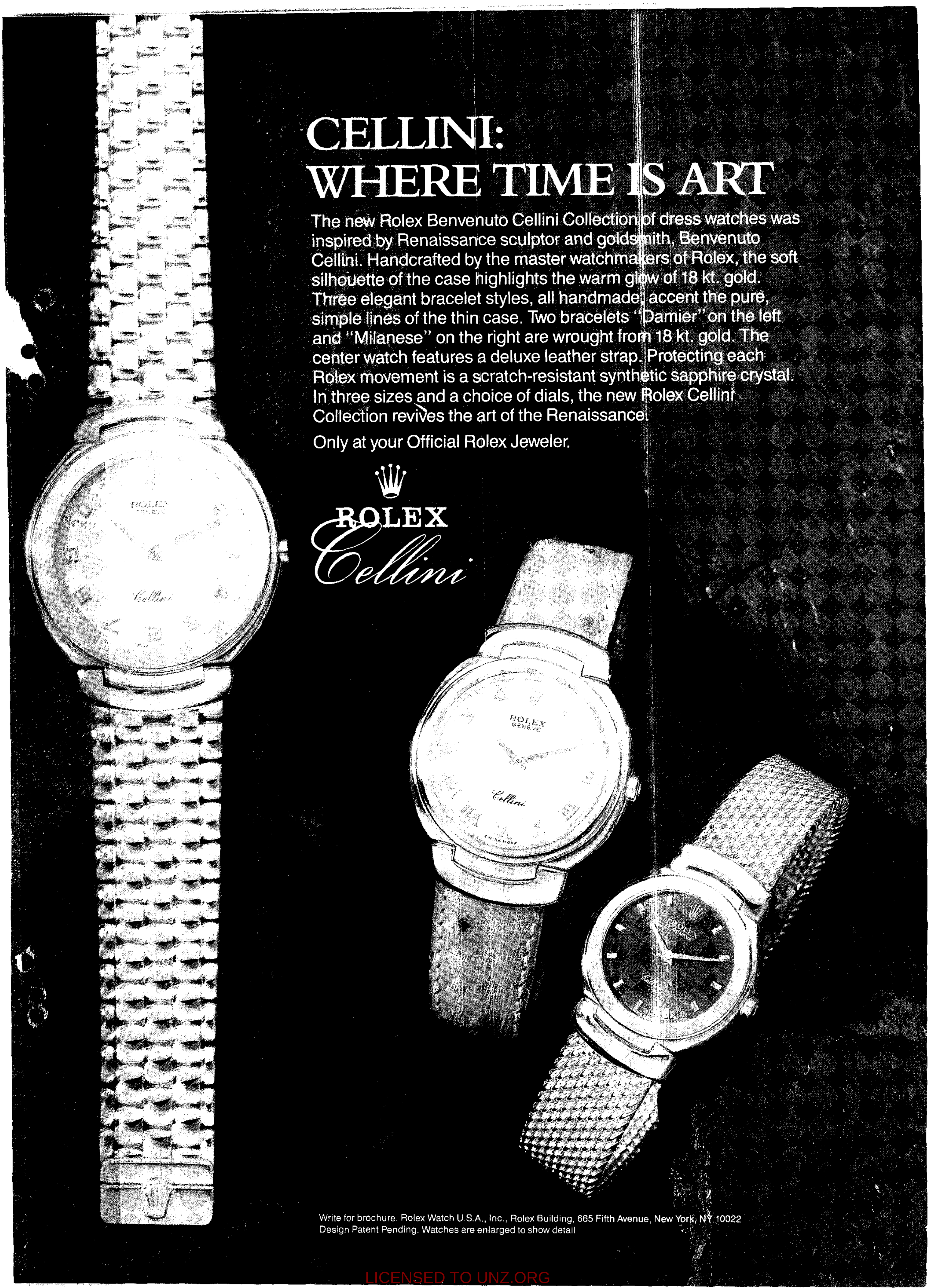
(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**SUSANNAH MC CORKLE,** a tall, blond, silky-voiced singer and musical scholar (she's known for unearthing forgotten tunes, some of them with Portuguese lyrics), is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine-fifteen, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slighty decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. The **MANHATTAN RHYTHM KINGS,** the room's current occupants, are a tap-dancing, harmonizing trio who concentrate on old-timey stuff. Tuesday through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven, and Sundays at three.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (74[illegible]-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—[illegible] having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. **HILTON RUIZ,** who heads a fivesome Dec. 14-15, is a pianist with strong jazz and Latin roots; his impressive résumé includes employment with Rahsaan Roland Kirk's band in the seventies. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? The jazz-rock pioneers **BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS,** who will be here Dec. 11-16, were an exceptionally hot



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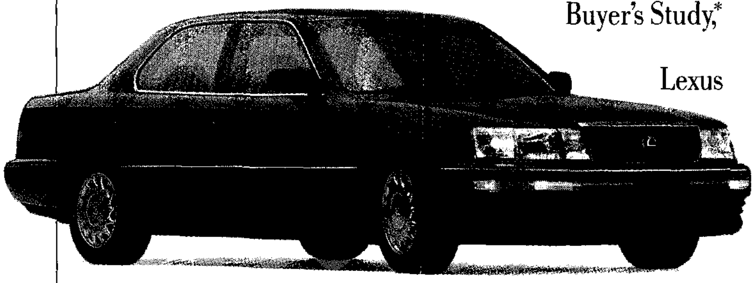

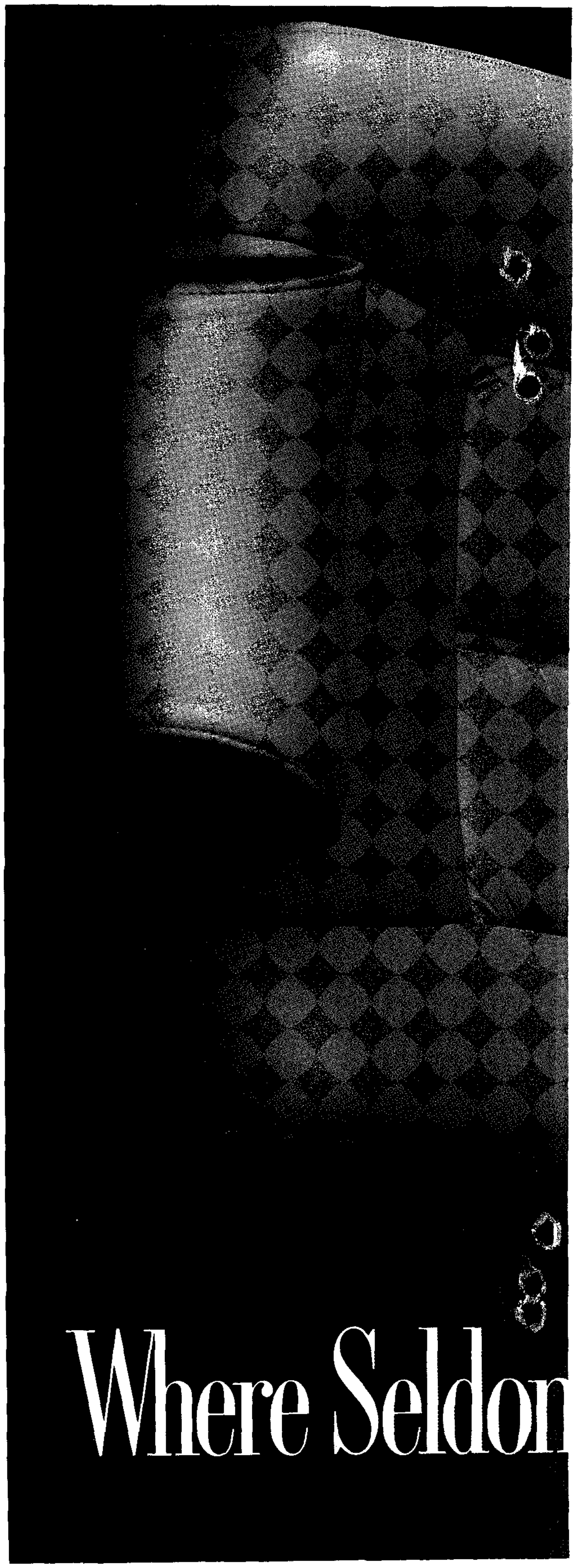

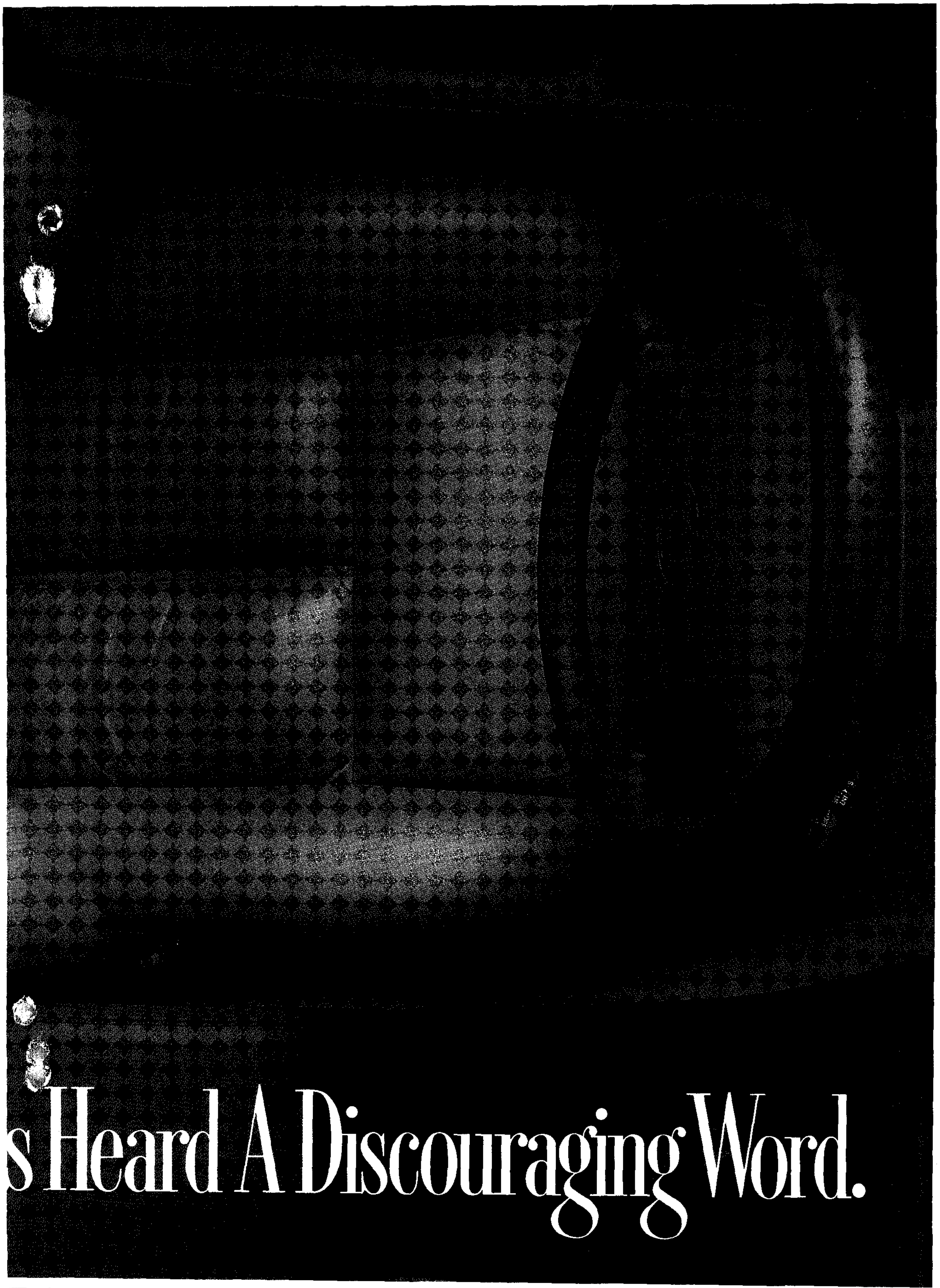

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Lorna Luft at Rainbow & Stars

outfit in 1969 and 1970. Before long, lead singer David Clayton-Thomas jumped ship, and, as one critic put it, the group was no longer "good enough to be really successful but not bad enough to quit." Clayton-Thomas, it turned out, couldn't stay away—his solo career was a little lacklustre—and he rejoined in 1974. He can still be heard with the group all these years later. **JANET MARLOW** will be here Dec. 17, and vibes player **MILT JACKSON** and the **MONTE ALEXANDER** trio begin a week-long tenure on Dec. 18. Music begins at around nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. **MICHAEL HEDGES**—incidentally, the first artist to sing on a Windham Hill record—plays a flashy, New Age acoustic guitar, banging the neck and fret the way Keith Jarrett tinkers with the innards of a piano. He'll be here on Dec. 13. The hoarse and vigorous singer-guitarist **RICHIE HAVENS,** who was born in Bed-Stuy in 1941 and who appeared at a gig known as Woodstock, comes in Dec. 14. Dec. 16 belongs to a variety of artists, including **CHRISTINE LAVIN** and **JOHN GORKA.** Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. **BOBBY WATSON,** one of the late Art Blakey's better-known protégés, works with pianist **JOHN HICKS** and bassist **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE** through Dec. 15. Another formidable trio gets started on Dec. 17: pianist **KENNY BARRON,** drummer **BEN RILEY,** and bassist **PAUL WEST.** Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to singer and pianist **BOBBY SHORT** Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CAT CLUB, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by heavy-metal fans, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. The hoofers run the gamut from seasoned pros who could do the Lindy in their sleep to enthusiastic novices whose steps are more commonly seen in aerobics classes. **BILL CONWAY** and the Swing Express set the pace on Dec. 16. Music from eight to midnight.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club, a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti, is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. The Shams will be here on Dec. 15. Music from nine-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from ten-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. **CAROL SLOANE** appears with a trio Dec. 11-16, and the **ROY HAYNES** quartet starts up on Dec. 18. Music after ten.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The décor is prehistoric punk—a neo-Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls. **SYLVAIN SYLVAIN,** a former New York Dolls singer and guitarist, claims Dec. 14. While his ex-bandmate David Johansen has metamorphosed into lounge lizard Buster Poindexter, Sylvain has retained most of the trappings—and the musical inclinations—of his glam-rock days. Other events: the Waldos on Dec. 15; the Blue Chieftains on Dec. 16; and Zen Tricksters on Dec. 18. Shows weeknights at ten-thirty, Fridays and Saturdays at midnight.

DELTA 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A pleasant hangout for white-collar trash, where you'll find cold Dixie beer, collard greens, and plenty of men who know how to wear a leather vest. As if that weren't enough, the bar-and-restaurant also features a corrugated-tin ceiling and a truckload of sort-of-Southern items: a photo booth, a giant Amoco sign, an Evel Knievel lunchbox. Most nights, the buffet turns into a bandstand at nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. The sparkling bebop pianist **TOMMY FLANAGAN** leads a trio Dec. 11-16; **RALPH MOORE** and his quintet get down to business on Dec. 18. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of businessmen and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find a Steinway grand, which belongs to **DOROTHY DONEGAN** Dec. 11-16 (with bassist **JON BURR**). Ms. Donegan has a virtuosic technique, which reflects both her classical training and her days as an Art Tatum protégée. But she's equally renowned for the vaudevillian antics that have been the trademark of her fifty-year career: dancing, stomping, rolling her head, impersonating jazz divas, and generally raising cain. Trombonist **AL GREY,** a Basie-band veteran who excels in the little-known art of making wah-wah noises with a rubber-plunger mute, comes in on Dec. 18 (with guitarist **JOE COHN** and bassist **STEVE NOVOSEL**). Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant-and-bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars and some Sixth Avenue-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John. **DR. JOHN** himself will be in residence here Dec. 12-13, and **BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO** will perform Dec. 14-15. Music begins after nine. Dining.

MARQUEE, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club, just off the West Side Highway, that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. The **CONNELLS** come in on Dec. 15.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home. Freedy Johnston and Lonesome Val trade sets on Dec. 13; **DRUNKEN BOAT,** Azalia Snail, and **WHEN PEOPLE WERE SHORTER** claim Dec. 14; and Boozoo Chavis & the Magic Sounds perform on Dec. 15.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and high-heeled ladies. It's not always easy to detect the music over the babble, but that shouldn't pose a problem for the rest of December, as composer-singer Frank Stallone performs with a twelve-piece big band. His show includes classic song arrangements by Billy May. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining. Closed Sundays.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot.* There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" **LORNA LUFT,** whose shows usually include some cabaret standards, some contemporary stuff, and some wistful, no-business-like-show-business stories, is in swing here just now. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a [illegible]g. Tuesdays belong to **VINCE GIORDANO AND [illegible]E NIGHTHAWKS.** Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker S[illegible] (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any give[illegible] night, can be seen roaming the streets of [illegible] Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, plenty of red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. Multi-instrumentalist **ABDULLAH IBRAHIM** leads an outfit here Dec. 11-16. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action every Monday. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

SWEETWATERS, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, and a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is usually given over to soul and R. & B. acts. **WILSON PICKETT,** whose hits from the sixties—"In the Midnight Hour," "Funky Broadway," etc.—live on in the annals of oldies radio and late-night-TV compilation albums, will be on hand Dec. 14-15.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A spacious, well-kept loft in the pool-hall district, where you'll find rock bands, blues bands, zydeco bands, and people wearing vinyl tour jackets. **NRBQ** have been in existence (in one form or another) since 1967, so they've had plenty of time to build up a repertoire. In fact, they've been known to challenge audiences to name a tune they can't play. Whether or not they do so when they perform here (Dec. 14-15), they can be expected to put on a strong show, and to offer material from every pop genre imaginable. Their sets start at eight-thirty.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, singer **PHYLLIS HYMAN** will be at work Dec. 13-15. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. **JACKIE MC LEAN,** an alto-sax man who blends bebop and free jazz as if they were oil and vinegar, leads a quartet Dec. 11-16. Pianist **GERI ALLEN,** bassist **CHARLIE HADEN,** and the **PAUL MOTIAN** trio begin a six-night stay on Dec. 18. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—**N[illegible] POTATO CABOOSE,** playing here Dec. 15, is [illegible] Washington-based outfit that works hard [illegible] its money: their sets run from sea chanteys to gospel to country to "Rocky Raccoon" to a whole lot of seventies-style rock and roll. The group plays a long, full set, replete with solos of every variety.

WONDERLAND, 519 2nd Ave., at 29th St. (213-5098)—When you're hungry for the blues, or just plain hungry. Trumpeter **DIZZY GILLESPIE** holds forth Dec. 11-13 at nine and eleven-thirty. **DAKOTA STATON** takes the bandstand Dec. 14-16, with sets at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one. Dining.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Music from eight weeknights, and Sundays from seven.

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PARIS

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EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

No one cared that dinner was two dressed-up chicken wings. No one groused over the diamonds-to-Pretoria irony of Blaine Trump winning the grand raffle prize, though Pat Buckley and Bill Blass couldn't agree about where on her dress Trump should anchor her new jewel-encrusted brooch (Blass won—and should have). Billy Norwich didn't even agonize over who might not see his reportage in the *News* the next day. The opening party for 7th on Sale offered too much to look at: an ugly armory transformed into a gracefully lush, white-draped and birchwooded illusion that David Lean could have spliced into "Doctor Zhivago"; Naomi Campbell in an Angela Davis Afro; Anna Wintour without glasses; Isaac Mizrahi gathering models as if he was handing out new rate cards. And too much to listen to: Carmelo Pomodoro giving tips to a woman holding two skirts, an 8 and a 12 (guess which she was?); Iman cooing at anything David Bowie said; the formidable Patti LaBelle being drowned out by a woman screeching, "This Mackie is mine!"

At dessert time, when the party opened up to a less tailored crowd, the armory swelled, the shopping went from cheerfully brisk to lovingly brusque, the music got jack swingier, and the fashion became more fun, especially with the late-arriving "drag clouds" that wafted in front of anything sparkly. "I'm not leaving until I buy something Pat Buckley wants," said one of the tufts. "She's fierce." Buckley soon stalked by on a mission, so the tuft followed her directly to Blass and, when the lady's back was turned, snatched a gown right out from under her. "I'm sure we're the same size," he chanted, tripping back. "What a night!" Even if you're a 12, it was.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Big Apple Circus—Performances under the little big top run through Jan. 6 in Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park. For ticket and schedule information, call 268-3030.

"The Jazz Passengers in Egypt"—A jazz-opera by Roy Nathanson (music) and Ray Dobbins (libretto). (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Dec. 13-16 at 7:30.)

"The Misadventures of Alice E. Neuman"—A theatre work loosely based on "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," written and directed by Dick D. Zigun. (Sideshows by the Seashore, Coney Island Boardwalk at W. 12th St. 1-718 372-5159. Dec. 15-16 at 2 and 6. Through Dec. 30.)

Bil Baird's Marionettes—The troupe's version of the "Alice in Wonderland" story, with songs by Sheldon Harnick and Joe Raposo. (John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. Dec. 15-Jan. 1. For information, call 564-8038.)

BIG APPLE CIRCUS
TB

The Big Apple Circus

ART

The most interesting, even revelatory, exhibition in town at the moment may be "The British Imagination: Twentieth-Century Paintings, Sculpture, and Drawings," at Hirschl & Adler (21 East 70th Street; through January 12). Works by twenty-two artists are included, beginning with the early moderns Walter Sickert (1860-1942) and his disciple Gwen John (1876-1939), and culminating with some of the best-known English painters working today, including Bacon, Freud, Kossoff, Auerbach, Hodgkin, and Hockney. The generation in between is represented on the one hand by influential and more or less orthodox modernist figures such as Bomberg, Nicholson, Moore, and Hepworth, and on the other by such nonconformists as the satirical Edward Burra and, especially, the ecstatic provincialist Stanley Spencer.

Throughout this exhibition, even in the most ostensibly abstract art, one detects an obsession with the figure and with narrative. Hodgkin's brilliantly gestural and chromatic compositions, for example, suggest the travelogue or the emotive episode. Also pervasive is an extraordinary sense of conflict, often within a single artist's work, between a rapturous Romanticism that is the native legacy of William Blake, Samuel Palmer, and the Pre-Raphaelites, and its flip side, a clinical, almost sadistic form of realism that has sources in German and French art. Degas and his subjects out of Émile Zola, for instance, were important to Sickert, and the spirit of Zola's "Nana" still seems to inhabit semi-abstract female nudes made fifty years later by Moore. Degas's remote presence (as well as the residue of German Neue Sachlichkeit painting of the twenties) seems to linger around studio setups by Freud, but so does a perverse Romanticism—a sort of God-is-in-the-details fervor that is the very hallmark of Ruskin's Pre-Raphaelite creed. It is Stanley Spencer, however, who emerges here as the Compleat British Artist: at once a realist and a symbolist, a Christian spiritualist and something of an erotic pagan, a latter-day Pre-Raphaelite and heir to Le Douanier Rousseau. With a spectacular work such as Spencer's bacchanalia-cum-kitchen-sink triptych, titled "The Resurrection: Waking Up," we experience the happy thrill of perfect and improbable resolution.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries" includes four hundred works of art from the pre-Columbian era through 1950. Through Jan. 13. . . . ¶ "Théâtre de la Mode," in the Costume Institute, is a re-creation of a 1945 fashion exhibition that raised money for French war relief. Due to a fabric shortage, the couture, by such designers as Balenciaga, Lanvin, and Worth, was presented in miniature, on thirty-inch wire mannequins with ceramic heads. A hundred and seventy of the original dolls have been restored for this show. . . . ¶ A new skylit sculpture court has opened on the main floor, and is home to several large French and Italian works from the seventeenth century to the twentieth, including Sarrazin's "Leda and the Swan" and Rodin's "The Burghers of Calais." [illegible]. ¶ The recently acquired "Evening: Landscape with Aqueduct" by Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) is the focus of a small exhibition of his landscapes and related works. Through Jan. 13. . . . ¶ Fifteen American quilts and coverlets, made between 1803 and 1930, are on view. Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ More than two hundred American portrait miniatures, most of them in watercolor on ivory, and none larger than six inches in size. Among the immortalized sitters are George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and Abraham Lincoln. Through Feb. 10. . . . ¶ A hundred and twenty-five bone carvings from New Guinea. The functional tools and decorative pieces are fashioned from three types of bone: bird, pig, and human. . . . ¶ The annual Christmas tree and Neapolitan crèche are on view in the Medieval Sculpture Hall. Through Jan. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture" is divided into four themes (graffiti, caricature, comics, advertising) and includes more than two hundred and fifty works. Through Jan. 15. . . . ¶ A breakthrough show of works in various mediums by Kiki Smith, one of the contemporary scene's outstanding originals. Smith, who seems to mistrust slickness and packaging of all sorts, has often displayed an offhand approach to exhibitions. Two of the more memorable pieces on view here are a site-specific floor sculpture consisting of much-larger-than-life-size lead-crystal spermatozoa, and an exquisitely fragile wall relief, made of what appear to be flayed paper skins, that gives a whole new meaning to the word "bodysuit." Through Jan. 1. . . . ¶ Twenty-one new photographs by Paul D'Amato, Carl Pope, and JoAnn Verburg. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ A video installation by Gary Hill, consisting of body images displayed through stripped cathode-ray tubes. Through Jan. 6. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Thirty-seven black-and-white and color silk-screen paintings by Robert Rauschenberg that were executed between 1962 and 1964. Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A lobby installation by Joseph Kosuth, who has selected works from the museum's collection that at one time or another may have been deemed offensive. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ [illegible] exhibition of sixty paintings by Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917). Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "Milton Avery in Black and White" is a display of eighty drawings in pencil, ink, and crayon, made by Avery between 1929 and 1959. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm and bamboo. Through Feb. 4. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Court Arts of Indonesia" is a meticulously selected and beautifully installed show, with just the right number of pieces to titillate but not overwhelm. Extraordinary detail abounds, especially in numerous ceremonial lances, which were symbolic expressions of power; very delicate gold jewelry; woven fabrics; and

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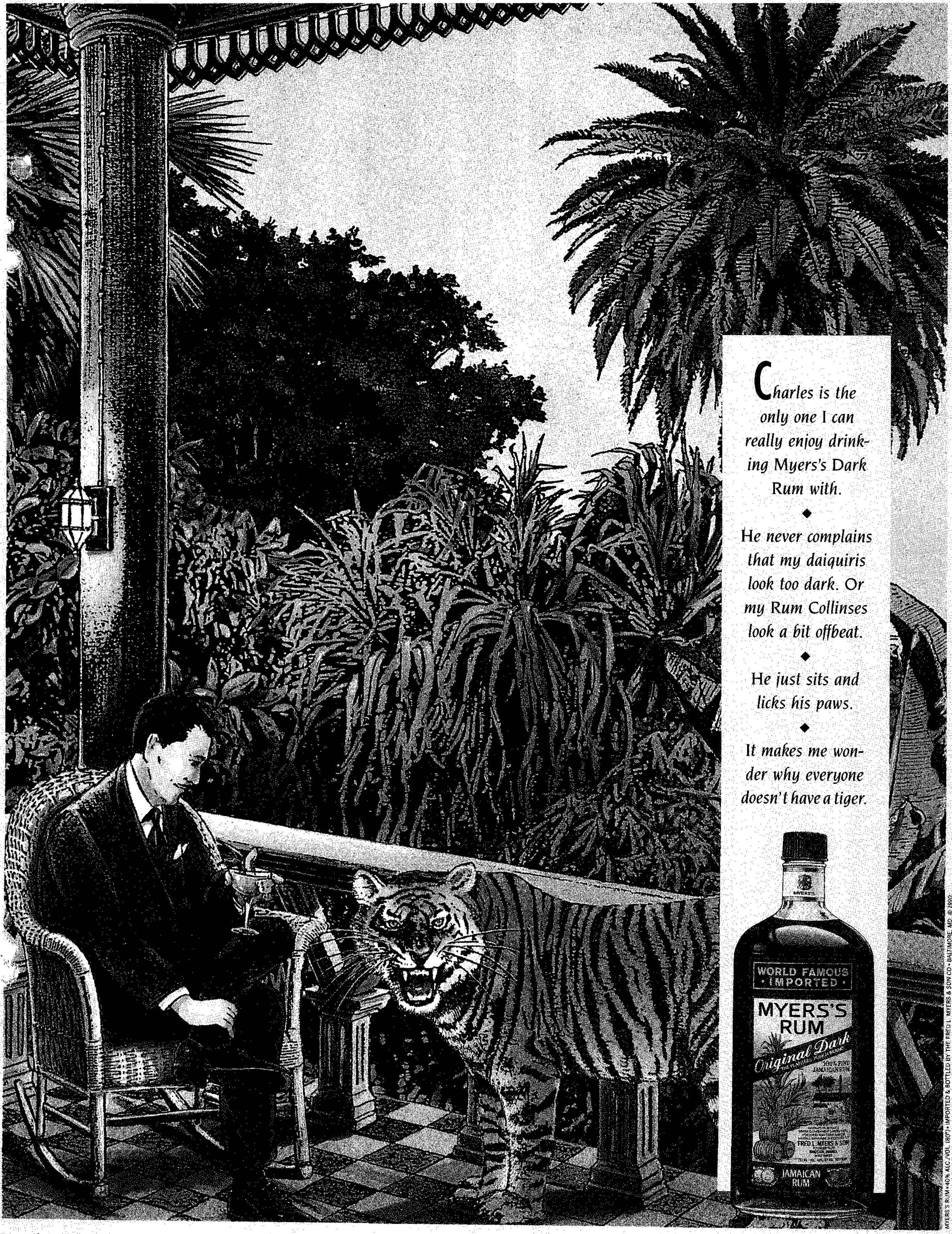
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shadow puppets. Through Dec. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—"The Eccentric Painters of Yangzhou" presents thirty works by eleven unorthodox, innovative artists who lived in southern China in the eighteenth century. Through Dec. 15. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Be Merry & Wise" examines the development of children's books in England from the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth. Among the many books, manuscripts, and drawings on view are the "History of Tom Thumbe" (1621, the first English folktale in print), Dorothy Kilner's "The Life and Perambulation of a Mouse" (1783), and the third edition of Edward Lear's "Book of Nonsense" (1861). Through Feb. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"The Cutting Edge" gathers together eighty-six works from the past thirty years for an examination of contemporary, and sometimes non-traditional, American folk art. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Through maps, paintings, photographs, and prints, "Within Bohemia's Borders" documents the turbulent history of Greenwich Village from 1830 to 1930. Through Feb. 3. . . . ¶ Forty-five oil paintings by the hundred-year-old Theresa Bernstein, depicting the urban scene in New York City from 1914 to 1930. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A hundred and thirteen master drawings, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, by such artists as Poussin, Fragonard, Delacroix, and Cézanne. From the Louis-Antoine Prat collection, in Paris. Through Jan. 20. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Rhetorical Image" seeks to investigate the ways in which artists from around the world respond to various political situations. Among the twenty artists presenting photographs, videos, paintings, and installations are Barbara Steinman, Cildo Meireles, and Krzysztof Wodiczko. Through Feb. 3. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"On Paper" examines the history of papermaking, from its invention in China through John Cage's edible paper. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Manuscript fragments, letters, first editions, and illustrations are all part of "Charles Dickens: His Life and Work." (Berg Collection. Open daily, except Sundays and Thursdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957)—The centerpiece of this show of early works is the first version of the artist's masterpiece "The Kiss," a carving in stone that is a blissful merger of figuration and abstraction. Also of prime interest is an exquisite 1909 marble carving titled "Trunk," which is a very sexy representation of a woman's torso. Through Dec. 15. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Short List—**giorgio de chirico,** Borghi, 26 E. 80th St. (open Mondays, through Jan. 15); **glenn goldberg,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Jan. 9); **conrad marca-relli,** Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. (through Dec. 15); **maryan,** Bernard, 33 E. 74th St. (through Dec. 22); **joan mitchell,** Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (through Dec. 15); **sigmar polke,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through Jan. 15); **kurt trampedach,** Stone, 48 E. 86th St. (through Dec. 20); **charles wells,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through Dec. 29); **andrew wyeth,** Marcelle, 996 Madison Ave., at 77th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 15).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Troy Brauntuch—With this show Brauntuch proves that he is the master among contemporary artists who create complex narrative paintings. His work is the least encumbered with complicated plot twists, and the most ethereal—in image and in message. As in the past, these new works contain hard-to-read images in single colors that seem to have congealed out of vapor in an instant. A five-panel piece showing a weaver in an empty workshop is seen through a loom, as if you were looking through the weave of the canvas itself. It has a narrative ambition that is at once workaday and grand, containing as it does references to "Las Hilanderas," one of the great narrative puzzles by the master himself, Velázquez. The quality of the painting is generally gorgeous: a gray image of a hospital bed is simply milky, while a depiction of what looks like a stack of pillows viewed in dim light suggests the last moments of consciousness before sleep, or perhaps death. Through Dec. 15. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

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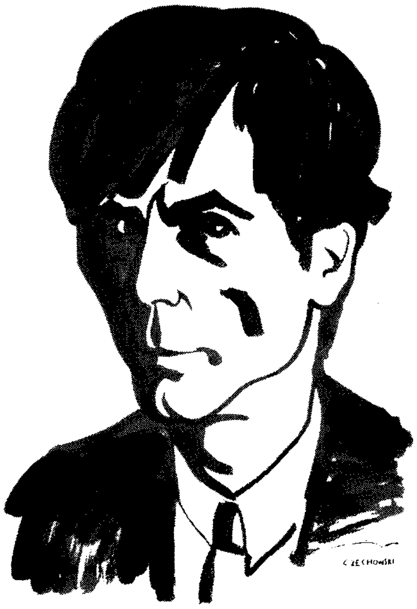
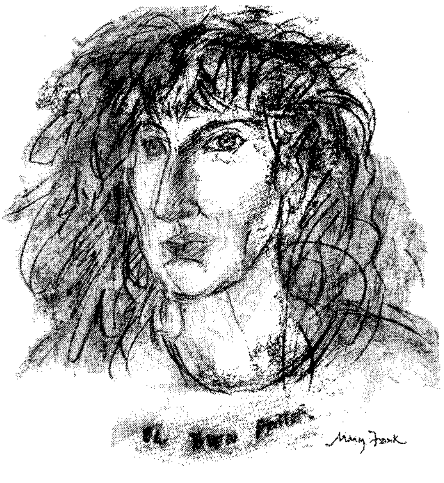


Richard Tuttle

Mary Frank—A compelling and effectively installed show of recent works in mixed mediums, including ceramic, bronze, plaster, oil on aluminum, oil on and under glass, and drawings on paper as well as on natural elements such as fungi. Frank has always been an extremely idiosyncratic figurative artist whose work, in whatever medium, eludes summary. Mythology—variously Biblical, classical, folkloric, or fairy-tale-derived—is a frequent source, but her subject always seems to be screened through a very specific personal filter. It is often hard to locate an exact poetic mood. A light and somewhat arty girlishness, for instance, is countered by a formidable morbid streak; a stylistic directness is offset by emotional inscrutability. This exhibition stimulates both thought and feeling; it makes you want to linger and figure it out. Through Dec. 28. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)



Self-portrait by Mary Frank

Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-78)—"Splitting," executed in 1974, was one of Matta-Cla[illegible]s simplest anti-architectural works. It consisted of a generic row-type house in Englewood, New Jersey, that the artist literally split down the center, from rafters to foundation[illegible] through windows and stairs. The four upper corners of the house were removed and are on display here. They are bizarre artifacts—n[illegible] quite sculptures but more than documents. Perhaps more "tangible" are the single-image pictures and photo-collages, which, in their documentary simplicity, portray the subversive gesture of cutting apart the family home as a buoyant act of liberation. Perhaps Matta-Clark's brilliance was his ability to make art that was at once formally pure and socially incisive. Through Dec. 15. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**luis cruz azaceta,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 29); **warren brandt,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 22); **willem de kooning** and **jean dubuffet,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 19); **jean dubuffet,** Urban, 500 Park Ave., at 59th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 22); **minnie evans,** Ross, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 29); **frank faulkner,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 29); **david hockney,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 5); **robert indiana,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Dec. 31); **bill jacklin,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 31); **william king,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 20); **robert m. kulicke,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through Dec. 22); **wifredo lam,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 22); **egon schiele,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 12); **sean scully,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Jan. 9); **george sugarman,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 19); **richard tuttle,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 12).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Guillaume Bijl—Two shows of new work. At the Shainman gallery (560 Broadway) this Belgian artist displays a series of eight tableaux of assembled objects. Together they contain some sort of full life cycle: from decorating a home to storing the residue of lives past, from the dressing room to the rec room to the attic. Two of the groupings consist of decorative objects—one of classical plaster ornaments, the other of framed posters—complete with price labels. They bypass the usual discussion of commodity in a romantic yet unsentimental way. In a separate installation, at Koury Wingate (578 Broadway), the artist has taken a very *different tack, transforming a small* room into the perfect tuxedo-rental shop. It is so exact in its details that some viewe[illegible] may mistakenly think the current lull in t[illegible] art market has prompted at least one galle[illegible] to hedge its bets with another line of goods. Both shows through Dec. 22.

Jiří Georg Dokoupil—Funny little paintings, made with water, pear juice, or bananas, that depict a row of spoons, a grid of bananas, a row of bottles, and a piece of string. The images look as if they were burned onto raw canvas, like solarized photographs, and manage to be both pranksterish and poignant. Through Dec. 26. (Kasmin, 580 Broadway.)

Eric Fischl—Very interesting paintings inspired by a trip to India. Some of the figures in the works that depict groups of people are a bit wooden, as if the artist were timid about the subjects, but the paintings of solitary figures are most compelling. A picture of a holy man standing on his head, which is buried in sand, has an exquisite yellow background, and it demonstrates the profound maturity of the artist's technique. In other

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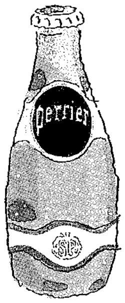

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works, a thin young woman in a red-and-yellow sari forms a bright light framed by the grisaille of the temple statues on either side, and a veiled dancer performs inside a pea-green flame. Through Dec. 22. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

MICHAEL GOLDBERG—New canvases by an artist whose sensibility continues to affirm a faith in the restorative powers of painting. Whether the paint is thinly applied or caked on, these are vibrant, dynamic works. Through Dec. 21. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

ANTON HENNING—Very well-made abstract paintings with touches of Dubuffet, Tàpies, Rauschenberg, Twombly, Schnabel, and Baechler by a young German artist whose hand seems quicker than his mind. Through *Dec. 22. (Baghoomian, 555 Broadway.)*

JUSTEN LADDA—This artist of grace and intelligence seems caught between worlds. Known primarily for guerrilla public art installations that, when viewed from the right spot, pop out at the viewer like mammoth-scale 3-D nightmares, Ladda is now attempting to bring his mysterious sense of poetry to discrete objects. This show features a series of "mirrors," which are photographically printed, fanciful antique frames surrounding dark, vaguely reflective fields of lacquered ink. In the mirrors themselves are occasional images, like a mask, an ape, or a suit of armor. These works are less illusionistic than his better-known sculptures and public paintings and their literal quality tends to dampen their evocativeness. Also included is a richer series of "straight" paintings on beautifully grained woods. These, too, are about illusion, but they are simultaneously simpler and more baffling: one consists of two groups of intersecting circles—one green, the other orange—entitled "Apples and Oranges," while another, entitled "Mustang," contains a sly reference to Duchamp's "Tu m'." Through Dec. 22. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

SEAN LANDERS—*This artist deals with fame and* ennui in a clever and amusing way. In the center of the gallery are clay sculptures displayed on Victorian stands, a milk crate, and a pair of spackle cans, and wrapped in plastic bags, as if they were in a perpetual state of unfinishedness or, perhaps, mounted under protest. They bear such titles as "Frugal Gourmet," "Irish Drunk," and "The Breast." The walls surrounding them are lined with "drawings" consisting of handwritten stories—by Landers' imaginary alter ego, Chris Hamson—about the artist's thwarted pursuit of fame and fortune, and about his tortured love life. The stories are extremely well written and convincing, drawing you in with their fictions every time. Through Dec. 22. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

JOHN MILLER—With the exception of two nicely done graphite drawings, everything here is coated in excretory brown—paintings embedded with junk; a hanging sphere covered with tiny mattresses, tires, and oil drums; and even a modern-day Echo and Narcissus, she in "fashionable" jogging wear, he, before his mirror, in a "republican" robe. Some pieces are references to other artists and seem to be part critique, part a deliberate display of envy—for example, a door and frame, covered in the usual shade of brown, that evokes Robert Gober. The only brownless work in the show, a statue, covered in 22k. golden-calf gold, of a couple in a lewd embrace, seems lifted from a recent Koons representation of himself and Cicciolina, but also recalls the cheap zodiac statues that may have inspired the Koons piece. Through Dec. 15. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

KAREN SYLVESTER—There now seems to be a spectrum of artists working with cartoon characters. At one end are Kenny Scharf and Ronnie Cutrone, and at the other are Meyer Vaisman and Karen Sylvester. (Richard Prince, with his joke paintings, seems to stand in the center.) Here, Sylvester has enlarged photographs of people with goofy expressions, in the midst of laughing or shouting, and painted on them a sea of lesser-known cartoon creatures, from the eighteenth century to the present. These paintings are funny, but there's also something brutal about them. One particularly riotous work depicts a shouting match between all sorts of figures. Through Dec. 22. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

DAVID WOJNAROWICZ—This artist did not receive much attention until he contracted AIDS and began making art that eloquently expressed his anger at our society and the way it deals with the disease. But, as this retrospective exhibition of paintings and painted objects makes clear, Wojnarowicz has been practicing his own form of guerrilla politics from the start. If you expect his paintings to engage in a dialogue about painting, you are certain to be disappointed; but if you view them as a kind of magical visual poetry you are likely to find a strange, disturbing, and horrifically beautiful world. A look at some of his writing, a few examples of which appear in the catalogue, could serve as a starting point. Wojnarowicz began his artistic life on the street, but, unlike his peers Haring and Holzer, he chose the streets because he grew up on them. There is something of the wild child to this work—much of it fixates on such boy imagery as dinosaurs, skeletons, machines, and sweaty sex. As Wojnarowicz's illness has brought the work a greater urgency and forced him into the larger public eye, the spirit of the boy has remained, bolstered in some odd way by wisdom. His fierce independence is the source of the work's strength. Through Jan. 12. (Exit Art, 578 Broadway.)

SHORT LIST—**PHOEBE ADAMS** and **MARK TANSEY**, Marcus, 578 Broadway (through Dec. 22); **POLL**

BONDS

A thirty-two-foot-long row of twelve vertical iron slabs was recently erected in the narthex of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, in honor of the church's Native American Thanksgiving Celebration. (It will remain on view until shortly before Christmas.) Entitled "Suspension," it is held together by thin steel pipes and resembles a rope footbridge turned on its side. Collaged onto its front and back are objects that evoke everything from the Boer War to South Bronx poverty. South African artist Georgie Papageorge's intention was, she says, "to symbolize the union of all races on earth amid wealth and poverty and war and peace and to capture the zing of vitality of New York." Among her materials: chunks of gold reef (the rocks from which gold is mined); corrugated iron, used to build shanties in South African black townships; rusted round tops from food tins carried by British soldiers in the Boer War; zebra and cattle pelts; graffiti scrawled by South Bronx junior-high-school students; and a buffalo hide painted by Sioux in South Dakota that depicts a Sioux bearing the earth on his back. The backdrops for several of the slabs are made of burnt canvas, a touch Papageorge is especially proud of. "History," she says, "is a series of colossal fires."

APFELBAUM, Lipton, 67 Prince St. (through Dec. 21); **DEBORAH BUTTERFIELD**, Thorp, 103 Prince St. (through Jan. 19); **DALE CHIHULY**, Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Dec. 29); **JACK GOLDSTEIN**, Weber, 142 Greene St. (through Dec. 22); **RODNEY GRAHAM**, Burgi[illegible] 130 Prince St. (through Dec. 22); **GERTRUDE GLASS GREENE** and **BALCOMB GREENE**, Perlow, 560 Broadway (through Dec. 29); **JON KESSLER**, Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. (through Jan. 5); **AGNES MARTIN**, Pace, 142 Greene St. (through Jan. 12); **ROBERT MASON**, Katzen, 475 Broome St. (through Dec. 31); **MARIO MERZ**, SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. (through Jan. 26); **HELMUT MIDDENDORF**, Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through Jan. 12); **CLAES OLDENBURG AND COOSJE VAN BRUGGEN**, Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through Jan. 12); **DAVID PARRISH**, Meisel, 141 Prince St. (through Jan. 25); **ELLEN PHELAN**, Toll, 146 Greene St. (through Dec. 22); **LEO RABKIN**, Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through Jan. 5); **JUDY RIFKA**, Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through Jan. 5); **FRANK STELLA**, 65 Thompson Street Gallery (through Jan. 26); **ROBERT WATTS**, Castelli, 578 Broadway (through Jan. 12).

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BLOOMINGDALE'S

PHOTOGRAPHY

IT'S not exactly news that Jan Groover has stretched the genre of still-life photography. A show of her work three years ago at the Museum of Modern Art underlined the range she had achieved with subjects that others might have felt were limited. Her latest exhibition, at the Robert Miller gallery (41 E. 57th Street; through Dec. 29), soars with the notion of possibilities. It's as if her commitment to still-life over the years were being repaid by objects and backdrops that appreciated her years of looking.

Groover is one of those rare photographers who are equally skilled in color and black-and-white. Here we see her as a colorist whose intuition is as refined as that of a seasoned abstract painter; in fact, she even paints some of the objects before she photographs them. Like a photographer, however, she respects the concrete. When we asked her about some pears she'd painted gray, she told us, "It's amusing to me that they last longer when they're painted. You don't have to buy them every day. The paint keeps the fruit flies away."

Balance, repetition, change, texture, shape, and light all come together so gracefully in Groover's work that it seems a result more of magic than of control. She doesn't restrict herself with superstructures; rather, her sense of organization is responsive to the existing elements. There's much about Groover's work that reminds one of the liberations and the new ways of looking that came with modern art. When we looked at her work from across the room, we thought of Morandi's paintings: his ever-changing, subtle, and beautiful still-lifes of bottles. Other artists haunt the pictures, too—Giacometti, Picasso, and two of Groover's favorites, Philip Guston and Fra Angelico. But instead of quoting these artists she is joining them.

At the gallery we heard that Groover is leaving America to live in France. We were curious how her pictures would evolve, and she gave us a clue. "It will be nice to have a window," she said.

ILSE BING—Collages from the past eleven years by an artist who stopped taking pictures in the fifties. The works—made up of bits and pieces of Bing's photographs, as well as safety pins, colored glass, coins, wire, and fragments of mirrors—give new form to what once attracted her eye. Through Dec. 29. (Min-Lowinsky, 584 Broadway.)

SHORT LIST—**ANSEL ADAMS**, International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, noon to 8; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through Feb. 3); **KEITH CARTER**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Jan. 12); **LYNN GEESAMAN**, P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through Dec. 22); **ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ** and **MICHAEL SPANO**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Dec. 29); **ARTHUR LEIPZIG**, Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 29); **GEORGE PLATT LYNES** and **MITCHELL SYROP**, Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Dec. 22); **IRVING PENN**, Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 19); **EZRA STOLLER**, Seagram Building, fourth floor, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through Feb. 15).

MUSIC

A PROGRAM of chamber music at Weill Recital Hall on December 17 stands out among current offerings. It begins and ends with rich, beautiful twentieth-century sonatas for violin and piano: the third of Charles Ives (one of his best integrations of American folk material with nascent modernism) and the third of George Enescu (one of his best integrations of Romanian folk material with late Romanticism). The evening's pianist is Robert Helps, often associated as accompanist with n[illegible]-music specialists like Bethany Beardslee. He does something all good pianists used to do and still should[illegible] namely, composing on the side; [illegible] "Fantasy" by Mr. Helps is on the bill.

There is also to be a *première*, o[illegible] song cycle by Aaron Jay Kernis, whose inventive handling of unusual combinations we have several times admired. This piece, "Brilliant Sky, Infinite Sky," is for baritone, violin, percussion, and piano. The baritone is Sanford Sylvan, whose smoothness and generosity are familiar from performances of Schubert, Mozart, and John Adams.

The only participant in the recital with whom we are not familiar is the violinist who is giving it: Jorja Fleezanis. Her position—concertmaster of the Minnesota Orchestra—recommends her; so does the intelligence of her choice of program and colleagues. We look forward to hearing her play.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

CHRISTMAS MUSIC

CANADIAN BRASS—The quintet teams up with the principal brass players from the New York Philharmonic, the Elmer Iseler Singers, and jazz trumpeter Jon Faddis. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 11 at 8.)

STONEWALL CHORALE—Works by Giovanni Gabrieli, Vivaldi, Britten, and John Rutter, directed by Bill Pflugradt. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 11 at 8.)

"CHRISTMAS RAPPINGS"—Michael Kelly directing Al Carmines' staged oratorio. (Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Square South. 777-0033. Dec. 13-17 and Dec. 19-22 at 8.)

ANONYMOUS 4—The vocal quartet performs musical settings of medieval English texts, interwoven with a narration from a fourteenth-century German "Story of the Three Kings." (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Dec. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 781-7737.)

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS—Clara Longstreth d[illegible]rects a-cappella works, including Britten[illegible] "A Boy Was Born." (St. Ignatius' Episcop[illegible] Church, West End Ave. at 87th St. Dec. 14 at 8 and Dec. 16 at 4. Tickets at the door before each concert.)

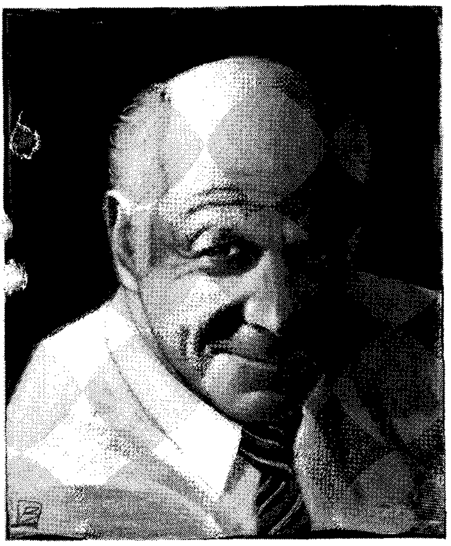
CHRISTMAS REVELS—The Nottingham Fair Early Music Ensemble, King Arthur's Brass, the Greenwich Morris Men, and others welcome the winter solstice. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Dec. 14 at 8, Dec. 15 at 3 and 8, and Dec. 16 at 2 and 7.)

WAVERLY CONSORT—Michael Jaffee directs "The Christmas Story," derived from medieval musical sources. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 139 West 46th St. Dec. 14-15 at 7 and 9:15. For information about tickets, call 666-1260.)

ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY MUSIC—Frederick Renz directs Bach's "Magnificat," with soloists Julianne Baird (soprano), Randall Wong (male soprano), Drew Minter (countertenor), Gregory Mercer (tenor), and Wilbur Pauley (bass); also, Bach's Third Orchestral Suite and Concerto for Two Violins. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Dec. 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

Gregg Smith Singers—Performing music by Purcell, Stravinsky, William Schuman, and Ronald Roxbury. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Dec. 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-2990.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost directs Poulenc's "Gloria" (with soprano Theresa Hamm) and various seasonal offerings. With the Metropolitan Singers/Greek Choral Society. (Holy Trinity Cathedral, 319 E. 74th St. Dec. 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 704-2100.)



William Schuman, composer (at Juilliard Opera Center)

Fiori Musicali—David Shuler directs the St. Luke's Choir and the Fairfield Orchestra, performing, among other works, Bach's A-Major "Missa Brevis" and Charpentier's "Oratorio de Noël" (in a new edition). (Church of St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. 633-2167. Dec. 16 at 4.)

Ensemble Project Ars Nova—Performing Christmas and courtly music from medieval Cyprus. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Dec. 16 at 5.)

Brick Presbyterian Church Choirs—David Weadon directs carols, with guest harpist Kathleen Bride. (Park Ave. at 91st St. Dec. 16 at 5. Admission by contribution.)

Aulos Ensemble—With the Medieval Sculpture Hall's Neapolitan Christmas tree as a backdrop, the period-instrument quintet and soprano Julianne Baird perform music from the Italian, French, and German baroque. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Dec. 16 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

New York City Gay Men's Chorus—Gary Miller directs works by William Bolcom, Conrad Susa, and others, as well as traditional sing-along selections. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 18-19 at 8.)

Lincoln Center Christmas Celebration—Hugh Wolff conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's, with mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade, flutist James Galway, and the Vienna Choir Boys. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 19 at 8:30.)

Handel's "Messiah"—St. Thomas Choir: Gerre Hancock directing. With Kathryn Domoney, soprano; Drew Minter, countertenor; Gregg Carder, tenor; Glendower Jones, bass; and the Concert Royal baroque orchestra. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013. Dec. 11 and Dec. 13 at 7:30.) . . . **National Choral Council:** Martin Josman (and twenty-two guest conductors) directing the annual organ-accompanied sing-in. With Crail Conner, soprano; Phyllis Jo Kubey, alto; Gregory Mercer, tenor; and John Ostendorf, bass. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 12 at 7:30.) . . . **Cathedral of St. John the Divine Choirs:** Directed by Stephen Sturk, with eight soloists. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Dec. 14 at 7:30.) . . . **Collegiate Chorale:** Robert Bass directs highlights, in a sing-along. (World Financial Center Winter Garden. Dec. 15 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.) . . . **Masterwork Chorus and Orchestra:** David Randolph directing, with alternating soloists. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 15 at 2:30 and 8, and Dec. 16 at 2:30 and 6:30.) . . . **Oratorio Society of New York:** Lyndon Woodside directing. With Brenda Harris, soprano; Rebecca Russell, mezzo-soprano; Michael Schade, tenor; and Michael Burt, bass-baritone. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 17 at 8.) . . . **Musica Viva:** Walter Klauss directs a sing-along, with orchestra. (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. Dec. 18 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.) . . . **Canterbury Choral Society:** Charles Dodsley Walker directing a sing-along of the Christmas section, with orchestra. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Dec. 19 at 8. For information about tickets, call 289-3402.) . . . **Hudson Chamber Symphony and Chorus:** Gary M. Schneider directs the Christmas section only, as well as the "Cantata de Navidad" by Juan Orrego-Salas. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 226. Dec. 19 at 8.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**Salome,** with Hildegard Behrens, Helga Dernesch, Graham Clark, and Ekkehard Wlaschiha; conducted by James Conlon. (Dec. 10 at 8:30 and Dec. 15 at 1:30.) . . . **Andrea Chénier,** with Aprile Millo, Camellia Johnson, Nicola Martinucci, and Sherrill Milnes; Julius Rudel. (Dec. 11, Dec. 14, and Dec. 19, all at 8.) . . . **Semiramide,** with Lella Cuberli, Marilyn Horne, Stanford Olsen, and Samuel Ramey; James Conlon. (Dec. 12 at 7:30.) . . . With June Anderson, Marilyn Horne, Stanford Olsen, and Samuel Ramey; James Conlon. (Dec. 15 at 8.) . . . With June Anderson, Marilyn Horne, Chris Merritt, and Samuel Ramey; James Conlon. (Dec. 18 at 7:30.) . . . **La Traviata,** with Marilyn Mims, Jerry Hadley, and Haijing Fu; Rico Saccani. (Dec. 13 at 8.) . . . **Faust,** with Diana Soviero, Susan Quittmeyer, Neil Rosenshein, Gino Quilico, and James Morris; Thomas Fulton. (Dec. 17 at 8.)

Juilliard Opera Center—Two operas by William Schuman—"The Mighty Casey" (1953) and "A Question of Taste" (his most recent opera, based on a story by the late Roald Dahl)—in fully staged productions conducted by Gerard Schwarz. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. 874-7515. Dec. 12 and Dec. 14 at 8, and Dec. 16 at 2.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 13-15 at 8: Samuel Wong, recently named the orchestra's assistant conductor, leads Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, Schnittke's "(K)ein Sommernachtstraum," and Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini," with pianist Vladimir Feltsman. . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 7:30: Kurt Masur directs Mendelssohn's "Elijah," with the Westminster Symphonic Choir and soloists Edith Wiens (soprano), Marietta Simpson (mezzo-soprano), Richard Leech (tenor), and Kevin McMillan (baritone).

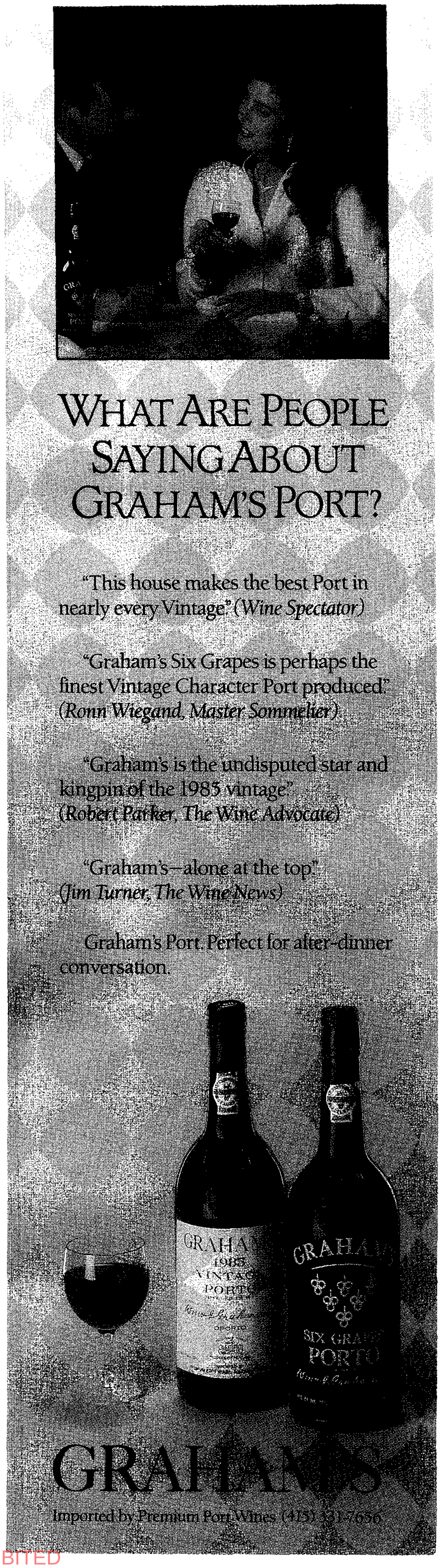
Juilliard Orchestra—Paul Zukofsky conducts Messiaen's "Turangalîla" Symphony, with *ondes martenot* player Jean Laurendeau. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 11 at 8. For information about tickets, which are free, call 874-7515.)

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducts Schoenberg's Piano Concerto (with Peter Serkin) and Verdi's "Four Sacred Pieces" (with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus); and all join for Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy." (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 12-13 at 8.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's—Robert Craft (Stravinsky's long-time associate) conducts twentieth-century classics by Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Satie. A benefit concert. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 16 at 8.)

"Beethoven: Out of His Time"—Conductor Robert Kapilow underscores the radical nature of Beethoven's First Piano Concerto, written in 1795, by presenting it in the context of two contemporaneous works (both in their New York premières): Jan Ladislav Dussek's E-Flat-Major Concerto (1791) and Muzio Clementi's C-Major Concerto (1793). With the Rutgers SummerFest orchestra, and piano soloists Ilana Vered (in the Beethoven), Jonathan Irving (in the Dussek), and Florence Millet (in the Clementi). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Dec. 19 at 8.)

Ascension Music—Dennis Keene directs the Ascension chorus and orchestra, the New York Cornet and Sacbut Ensemble, and soloists in Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553. Dec. 18 at 8.)



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RECITALS

American Brass Quintet—The group celebrates its thirtieth anniversary by performing music written in the past three decades by Elliott Carter, Jacob Druckman, Gilbert Amy, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 11 at 8.)

André Solomon-Glover—Baritone, with pianist Warren Jones, in a program of art songs that includes Schumann's "Liederkreis," Op. 24. Presented by Joy in Singing. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 13 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Solo and chamber music by Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Dec. 13 at 7:30 and Dec. 16 at 4.)

Vladimir Ashkenazy—Piano, performing works by Brahms (including his Third Sonata) and Schumann ("Kreisleriana"). (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 14 at 8.)

New York Chamber Ensemble—Stephen Rogers Radcliffe conducts music of a nocturnal bent, including Florent Schmitt's "Soirs," Joseph Schwantner's "Canticle of the Evening Bells," Dallapiccola's "Piccola Musica Notturna," and a chamber arrangement of Berlioz's "Les Nuits d'Été," with mezzo-soprano Charlotte Hellekant. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. Dec. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 870-2439.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Presenting trios by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schumann. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Dec. 14-15 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Performing music by Debussy, Paganini, Tchaikovsky, and Boccherini (a guitar quintet, with Eliot Fisk). (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 14 at 8 and Dec. 16 at 5.)

Maria Tchaikovska—The Ukrainian cellist, a past winner of the Casals competition in Budapest and Mstislav Rostropovich's successor as head of the Moscow Conservatory cello department, performs music by Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and Britten, as well as premières of works by Virko Baley and Leonid Hrabovsky. With pianist Juliana Osinchuk. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Dec. 14 at 8.)

Mendelssohn String Quartet—The ensemble's program includes two rarely heard Czech works: Janáček's "String Quartet No. 1, Kreutzer Sonata" (a musical rumination on Tolstoy's novel, rather than on Beethoven's sonata) and seven of Dvořák's "Cypresses" (the composer's own chamber arrangements of his early songs). (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 15 at 8.)

Abbey Simon—To mark the fiftieth anniversary of his professional début, the pianist performs Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 110; Schumann's C-Major Fantasy; Rachmaninoff's "Variations on a Theme by Corelli"; and three selections from Ravel's "Miroirs." (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 16 at 8.)

Harold Stover—Organ, playing works by Mozart, Franck, Leo Sowerby, and others. (Second Presbyterian Church, 6 W. 96th St. Dec. 17 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Jorge Federico Osorio—Piano, performing Mexican works, as well as Brahms' F-Minor Sonata. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 17 at 8.)

Jorja Fleezanis and Friends—The violinist, assisted by an ensemble, plays works by Ives, Enescu, Aaron Jay Kernis, and Robert Helps. (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 17 at 8.)

Horacio Franco—Playing a variety of recorders, in works dedicated to him by six contemporary Mexican composers. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. Dec. 18 at 7. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Bennett Lerner—The pianist performs a soirée of Dukas, Ravel, Debussy, Chausson, Fauré, and Poulenc. (Bösendorfer Center, 406 E. 79th St. Dec. 18 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Mary Margaret O'Hara—The appearance of Virgin recording artist Mary Margaret O'Hara at St. Ann's sounds like some Catholic boy's dream of a visitation. Her music—mostly compelling ballads with striking minimalist arrangements—showcases a voice that soars with all the yearning and good will of a prepubescent choirboy. What is more striking about O'Hara's songwriting, however, is its moving simplicity and intelligence. Her début album, "Miss America," is one of the purest, most intoxicating records of the year, and her performance of it promises to be haunting. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Dec. 14-15 at 8.)

Judas Priest and Megadeth—Whether you're feeling nostalgic for the Cold War or simply eager to hear the Ride of the Valkyries played on a 110-decibel buzz saw, this concert is the apocalyptic sound bomb for you. The headliner, Judas Priest, performs vigorously and efficiently without bringing an ounce of surprise to the genre, but Megadeth, led by former Metallica guitarist Dave Mustaine, provides a bonus infusion of gothic grandiosity and virtuosity within the strict confines of heavy-metal ritual. Bring cotton balls, and beware of flying hair. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Dec. 14 at 8. . . . ¶ Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Dec. 15 at 8.)

Warren Zevon—This stout-voiced balladeer of geopolitical dread is a true rocker, even in the stark setting of this tour. (He is accompanied only by two other guitarists, Dan Dugmore and Gurf Morlix.) On his recent, masterly records, he's explored electric blues, cyberpunk themes, and suburban angst with the assistance of Neil Young, Jerry Garcia, and members of R.E.M. and Jefferson Airplane. He'll do fine without all the instrumental firepower—his voice and his material are more than strong enough to triumph on their own. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Dec. 15 at 8.)

Lounge Lizards—Anchored by bandleader John Lurie's saxophone, the Lizards have gone from playing punkish fake jazz to something very much like the real thing—soundtrack jazz, perhaps. The movie would be stylish, absurd, and cool, and the music would establish a satisfying downtown noir mood. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 18 at 8.)

Jazz Concert—Harvie Swartz, Paquito d'Rivera, and the Manhattan Jazz Orchestra. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Dec. 11 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Frank Sinatra—With Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme. (Meadowlands Arena. Dec. 11-12 at 8.)

Living Colour—Academy Theatre, 234 W. 43rd St. 947-5850. Dec. 11-13 at 8.

Anthony Braxton Quartet—Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Dec. 12 at 8.

Living Colour

Edie Brickell & New Bohemians—With John Hiatt. (Beacon Theatre. Dec. 12-13 at 8.)

American Jazz Orchestra—With Dizzy Gillespie. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Dec. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 353-4196.)

Judy Carmichael—92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Dec. 15 at 8.

Vents D'Ouest—Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Dec. 15 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Roulette—Dec. 13 at 9: Bora Bergman, Bernadette Speach, and Myra Melford. . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 9: Diedre Murray, Fred Hopkins, Elliott Sharp, and Gerry Hemingway. (228 West Broadway. 219-8242.)

"Folk Masters: Traditional Music in the Americas"—Final performances of the series. Dec. 11 at 8: Joe Cormier, Alison Krauss, Michael Doucet, and Claude Williams. . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 8:30: Wayne Henderson, Raymond Kane, Jerry Douglas, and John Jackson. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Giants—Vs. the Buffalo Bills, Dec. 15 at 12:30.

Jets—Vs. the Indianapolis Colts, Dec. 16 at 1.

Rangers—Vs. the Washington Capitals, Dec. 17. . . . ¶ Vs. the Toronto Maple Leafs, Dec. 19. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Devils, Dec. 11. . . . ¶ Vs. the Toronto Maple Leafs, Dec. 18. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Boston Bruins, Dec. 18 at 7:45.

Knicks—Vs. the Miami Heat, Dec. 11 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Lakers, Dec. 18 at 8.

Nets—Vs. the Seattle Supersonics, Dec. 4. . . . ¶ Vs. the Charlotte Hornets, Dec. 11. (Game time, 7:30.)

(The Giants and the Jets play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. For information about Giants tickets, call 1-201 935-8111; for information about Jets tickets, call 1-516 538-6600. The Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. Closes Dec. 15. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

García Lorca—It's been fifty years since the publication of "Poet in New York," written while the Spanish author lived in the Columbia University dorms. To commemorate his time here, some of the city's universities, along with Casa de España and other interested foundations, have put together an exhibition of his manuscripts, letters, and drawings, which will be on display in the Rotunda of Columbia's Low Memorial Library (Broadway at 116th St.), through Jan. 20.

Shop Around—At the 7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St.: More than a hundred antiques exhibitors from across the country, Canada, and France will bring in their wares for the perusal of Christmas shoppers. (Dec. 14, from 4 to 9; Dec. 15, noon to 9; and Dec. 16, noon to 6.) . . . ¶ At the Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St.: Have you considered television memorabilia or rare prints? That, plus much more, is offered by the American Museum of the Moving Image, the New York Bound Bookshop, the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, and others. (Dec. 13-15, from 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ At Ferris Booth Hall, Columbia University, Broadway at 115th St.: The WBAI holiday crafts fair pools two hundred craftspeople, who often merge the practical with the fanciful; e.g., a purse may serve as a wall hanging. (Dec. 14, from 5 to 9; and Dec. 15-16, from 11 to 6.)

Tea Dances—Lay down your shopping bags and put on your dancing slippers: free tea and swing dancing in midtown, with live music by Buck Clayton's big band, in the arcade of 55 E. 52nd St. Dec. 15 from 3 to 6. The dances continue on Saturdays through Dec. 29.

Come All Ye Faithful—Carolling with those tuneful Park Rangers. Central Park: Dec. 15 at 2, meet at Fifth Ave. and 60th St. Inwood Hill Park: Dec. 16 at 2; call 781-4921 for more information.

Panel Discussion—Critics Akihiko Sendai, Miyabi Ichikawa, and Kazushi Ishida will join with Joseph V. Melillo, Bonnie Sue Stein, and J. Thomas Rimer to discuss the avant-garde in Japan and its place on the American stage. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Dec. 14 at 6:30.)

Readings and Talks—Dec. 13 at 7: Karl Shapiro reads from his own poetry. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 3: Allen Ginsberg reads from his own poetry. (The Ear Inn, 326 Spring St. Tickets at the door on the day of the reading.) . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 8: The final evening in the "Poets and Painters" series pairs John Hollander with Wayne Thiebaud and Mark Strand with William Bailey in talks about art, poetry, and collaboration. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.)

THE BROOKS BROTHERS PROMISE

Friends:

I write to you at a time when the retail clothing business verges on a state of chaos. Proud names and companies are financially strapped: constant sales and markdowns are the rule.

Despite the troubled retail environment, Brooks Brothers is resolved to uphold the values that have kept us the leader in understated American style for 172 years. We have no intention of lowering our standards of merchandise and service.

Our customers know this. No wonder so many of them regard Brooks Brothers as an anchor of consistency in a world that often seems to have lost its moorings.

The values we live by are well-defined:

BROOKS BROTHERS IS AUTHENTIC.

We originated what has become the classic American style of dress. We are the source for the genuine article.

BROOKS BROTHERS OPERATES WITH INTEGRITY.

Our way of doing business is grounded in honesty and reliability. We strive to offer real value in all the merchandise we sell. We will never mark up to mark down.

BROOKS BROTHERS CHAMPIONS CONTEMPORARY STYLE.

While ignoring fleeting fashions, we continually update our clothing to bring you classic style in contemporary good taste.

BROOKS BROTHERS OFFERS AN UNCONDITIONAL GUARANTEE OF QUALITY.

The only brand we sell is our own—your assurance that every garment meets our exacting specifications for quality and style. We stand behind the workmanship and durability of our merchandise. As ever, you may return any item at any time if you are not completely satisfied.

BROOKS BROTHERS IS FAMILY.

For generations, we have nurtured a spirit of loyalty and commitment among our associates and customers, providing superior personal service.

These values have long made Brooks Brothers unique in all of retailing. They constitute our promise to you that the Brooks Brothers experience has no equal.

Do we live up to this promise today? I encourage you to see for yourself. Visit any Brooks Brothers store. And discover how refreshing it is to shop at an establishment that cherishes its authenticity and truly values your business.

Sincerely,

Wm. V. Roberti

William V. Roberti,
President

Brooks Brothers

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 29.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "To Sleep with Anger" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 18: "Metropolitan" (directed by Whit Stillman), with Edward Clements, Carolyn Farina, Christopher Eigeman, and Taylor Nichols. From Dec. 19: "The Russia House" (Fred Schepisi), with Sean Connery, Michelle Pfeiffer, Roy Scheider, and James Fox.
Theatre 3: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, and Brad Dourif.
Theatre 4: Through Dec. 13: "Miller's Crossing" (†). From Dec. 14: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 5: "C'est la Vie" (Diane Kurys), with Nathalie Baye and Richard Berry.
Theatre 6: "Tune in Tomorrow . . ." (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Dec. 13: "A Game for Six Lovers" (1960, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze; in French), with Bernadette Lafont, Françoise Brion, and Alexandra Stewart.
From Dec. 14: (Separate admissions) "Company" (1970, D. A. Pennebaker), with Dean Jones, Barbara Barrie, and George Coe; and "She's Been Away" (1989, Peter Hall), with Peggy Ashcroft, Geraldine James, and James Fox.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 13: "Avalon" (†). From Dec. 14: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.
Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, and Brad Dourif.
Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 4: Through Dec. 18: "Reversal of Fortune" (†). From Dec. 19: "Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.
Theatre 5: Through Dec. 18: "Dances with Wolves" (†). From Dec. 19: "The Russia House" (Fred Schepisi), with Sean Connery, Michelle Pfeiffer, Roy Scheider, and James Fox.
Theatre 6: Through Dec. 13: "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone. From Dec. 14: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 18: "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone. From Dec. 19: "Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.
Theatre 2: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 13: "Ghost" (†). From Dec. 14: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, Christina Ricci, and Michael Schoeffling.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Dec. 11: (Matinées only) "The Nutcracker Prince" (Paul Schibli), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" (in Japanese).
From Dec. 12: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
Theatre 2: "GoodFellas" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau; in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Misery."

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Dec. 18: "White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.
From Dec. 19: "Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Henry & June" (†).
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film.
Theatre 3: "My Twentieth Century" (Ildiko Enyedi; in Hungarian).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 13: "Avalon" (†). From Dec. 14: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.
Theatre 2: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through Dec. 11: "The Grifters" (†).
From Dec. 12: "Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 18: "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone. From Dec. 19: "The Russia House" (Fred Schepisi), with Sean Connery, Michelle Pfeiffer, Roy Scheider, and James Fox.
Theatre 2: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
Through Dec. 18: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).
From Dec. 19: "Hamlet" (Franco Zeffirelli), with Mel Gibson, Glenn Close, Alan Bates, and Paul Scofield.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 2: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 18: "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" (directed by Fernando Birri; in Spanish), with Birri. From Dec. 19: "From Russia with Rock" (1988, Marjaana Mykkanen; in Russian and English).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: (Separate admissions) "Kiss Me Kate" (†); and "Akira" (Katsuhiro Otomo), a Japanese animated science-fiction film.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "The Krays" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Henry & June" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 11: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey. From Dec. 12: "Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 3: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 4: "My Twentieth Century" (Idiko Enyedi; in Hungarian).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 11: "Henry & June" (†). From Dec. 12: "Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.
Theatre 3: "Miller's Crossing" (†).
Theatre 4: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 5: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 6: "White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.
Theatre 7: "The Krays" (†).
Theatre 8: "Home Alone."
Theatre 9: Through Dec. 13: "Misery." From Dec. 14: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 11: "Child's Play 2" (John Lafia), with Alex Vincent. From Dec. 12: "Henry & June" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Dec. 18: "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film.
From Dec. 19: "The Russia House" (Fred Schepisi), with Sean Connery, Michelle Pfeiffer, Roy Scheider, and James Fox.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Henry & June" (†).
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 3: "White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.
Theatre 4: "Avalon" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Krays" (†).
Theatre 6: "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Edward Scissorhands" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through Dec. 13: "Ghost" (†).
From Dec. 14: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, Christina Ricci, and Michael Schoeffling.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
Through Dec. 11: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).
From Dec. 12: "The Sheltering Sky" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"C'est la Vie" (Diane Kurys), with Nathalie Baye and Richard Berry.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Vincent & Theo" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Tune in Tomorrow . . ." (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466) "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven; in German), with Lena Stolze.
Theatre 2: "Freeze—Die—Come to Life" (Vitaly Kanevski; in Russian).
Theatre 3: "L'Atalante" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through Dec. 11: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
From Dec. 12: "Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 13: "GoodFellas" (†). *From Dec. 14: "Mermaids" (Richard* Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 13: "Avalon" (†). From Dec. 14: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 18: "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone. From Dec. 19: "The Russia House" (Fred Schepisi), with Sean Connery, Michelle Pfeiffer, Roy Scheider, and James Fox.
Theatre 4: Through Dec. 18: "Reversal of Fortune" (†). From Dec. 19: "Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.
Theatre 5: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand.
Theatre 6: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 11: "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film. From Dec. 12: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 11: "Henry & June" (†). From Dec. 12: (Matinées only) "The Rescuers Down Under"; and (evenings only) "Henry & June" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

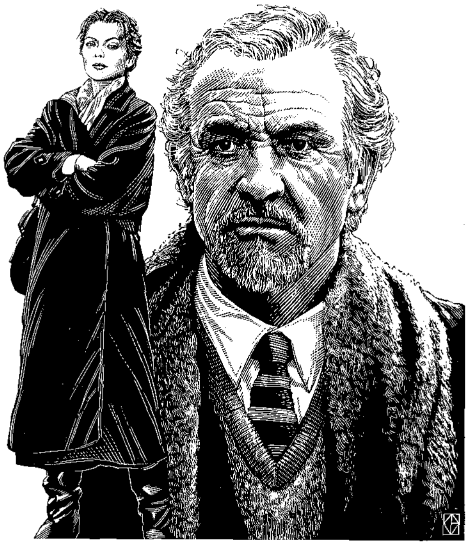
Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Marked for Death" (directed by Dwight H. Little), with Steven Seagal, Joanna Pacula, and Keith David.
Theatre 2: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 3: "Predator 2."
Theatre 4: "Child's Play 2" (John Lafia), with Alex Vincent.
Theatre 5: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Dec. 13: "Diamond's Edge" (Stephen Bayly), with Susannah York and Peter Eyre. From Dec. 14: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494) "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 18: "Graveyard Shift" (Ralph S. Singleton), with David Andrews, Kelly Wolf, Stephen Macht, and Brad Dourif. From Dec. 19: "Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 13: "Death Warrant" (Deran Saradian), with Jean-Claude Van Damme. From Dec. 14: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 18: "Ghost" (†). From Dec. 19: (Matinées only) "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Ghost" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340) "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.



Michelle Pfeiffer and Sean Connery in "The Russia House"

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 2: "The Rookie."

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Dec. 10: "The Blue Bird" (1940, directed by Walter Lang), with Shirley Temple, Spring Byington, Nigel Bruce, Gale Sondergaard, and Johnny Russell; and "The Thief of Bagdad" (1940), with Sabu, Conrad Veidt, June Duprez, and Rex Ingram.
Dec. 11-12: "The Long Voyage Home" (1940, John Ford), with Thomas Mitchell, John Wayne, Mildred Natwick, and Barry Fitzgerald; and "Knute Rockne—All American" (1940, Lloyd Bacon), with Pat O'Brien, Ronald Reagan, Gale Page, and Donald Crisp.
Dec. 13-15: "It All Came True" (1940, Lewis Seiler), with Ann Sheridan, Jeffrey Lynn, and Humphrey Bogart; and "His Girl Friday" (†).
Dec. 16-17: "Arise, My Love" (1940, Mitchell Leisen), with Claudette Colbert, Ray Milland, Walter Abel, and Dennis O'Keefe; and "Angels Over Broadway" (†).
Dec. 18-19: "Stardust" (1940, Walter Lang), with Linda Darnell, John Payne, Roland Young, Charlotte Greenwood, and William Gargan; and "A Child Is Born" (1940, Lloyd Bacon), with Geraldine Fitzgerald.

Cinema Village, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through Dec. 11: "In a Glass Cage" (1989, Agustin Villaronga; in Spanish); and "Taxi zum Klo" (1981, Frank Ripploh; in German).
Dec. 12-15: "Too Beautiful for You" (1990, Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Josiane Balasko, and Carole Bouquet; and "Monsieur Hire" (1990, Patrice Leconte; in French).
Dec. 16-18: "Hairspray" (†); and "Pink Flamingos" (1974, John Waters), with Divine.
From Dec. 19: "Longtime Companion" (†); and "Wild at Heart" (1990, David Lynch), with Nicolas Cage, Laura Dern, Diane Ladd, Willem Dafoe, and Harry Dean Stanton.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Dec. 10: "The Little Richard Story" (1980, William Klein), a documentary.
Dec. 11-13: "Mister Freedom" (1968, William Klein); and the Klein sequence from "Far from Vietnam" (1967).
From Dec. 14: "Funny Face" (1957, Stanley Donen), with Audrey Hepburn, Fred Astaire, Kay Thompson, and Michel Auclair; and "Sabrina" (1954, Billy Wilder), with Humphrey Bogart, Hepburn, William Holden, and John Williams.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Dec. 10: "The Bicycle Thief" (1949, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian); and "Miracle in Milan" (1951, De Sica; in Italian), with Francesco Golissano, Brunella Bovo, Paolo Stoppa, and Emma Gramatica.
Dec. 11: "Deception" (1946, Irving Rapper), with Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, and Claude Rains; and "Beyond the Forest" (1949, King Vidor), with Davis, Joseph Cotten, and David Brian.
Dec. 12: "Shadow of the Thin Man" (1941, W. S. Van Dyke) and "Song of the Thin Man" (1947, Edward Buzzell), both with Myrna Loy and William Powell.
Dec. 13: "Accattone!" (1961, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian); and "Open City" (1945, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi.
Dec. 14-15: "The 39 Steps" (1935, Alfred Hitchcock), with Madeleine Carroll, Robert Donat, Godfrey Tearle, Peggy Ashcroft, and John Laurie; and "The Lady Vanishes" (†).
Dec. 16: "Odd Man Out" (1940, Carol Reed), with James Mason, Robert Newton, and Kathleen Ryan; and "Outcasts of the Islands" (*1952*, Reed), with Trevor Howard, Robert Morley, Wendy Hiller, and Ralph Richardson.
Dec. 17: "Rashomon" (1951, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune, Machiko Kyo, Masayuki Mori, *and* Takashi *Shiumura*; and "Dodes'ka-den" (1971, Kurosawa; in Japanese).
Dec. 18: "The Big Sleep" (†); and "The Kennel Murder Case" (1933, Michael Curtiz), with Mary Astor, William Powell, Helen Vinson, and Jack La Rue.
Dec. 19: "Harriet Craig" (1950, Vincent Sherman), with Joan Crawford and Wendell Corey; and "Queen Bee" (1955, Ranald MacDougall), with Crawford, Barry Sullivan, Betsy Palmer, John Ireland, and Lucy Marlow.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Dec. 10 at 2:30: "The Dog's Birthday" (1974, directed by Jaime Humberto Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Jorge Martínez de Hoyos. . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 6: "Passion According to Berenice" (1976, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Martha Navarro and Pedro Armendáriz, Jr. . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 6:30: "Dream Documentary" (1981), "House of UnAmerican Activities" (1983), and "Dreams of China" (1989), all by Fred Marx, who will be present. . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 2:30: Three 1970 Mexican films by Arturo Ripstein, in Spanish—"Crime," "Beauty," and "Exorcism." . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 2:30: "Silence" (1969, Milan Peer) and "Elective Affinities" (1968, *Karel Vachek; in* Czech). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 6: "Time to Die" (1966, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Marga López. . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 6: "Funeral Ceremonies" (1969, Zdenek Sirovy; in Czech). . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 2:30: "Shipwreck" (1977, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with José Alonso. . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 3 and 6: "The Forbidden Land" (1989, Helena Solberg), a documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 6: "Bathroom Intimacy" (1990, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Gabriela Roel. . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 3: Early American silent films, "Blacksmith Scene" (1893), "Beheading a Chinese Prisoner" (1900), and others. . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 6: "Hell Has No Limits" (1977, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Roberto Cobo. . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 6: Early American silent films, "Blacksmith Scene," "Beheading a Chinese Prisoner," "Suspense" (1913), "Miss Lulu Bett" (1921, William deMille), and others. . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 2: "Mary My Dearest" (1979, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Héctor Bonilla. . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 2:30: Early American silent films, "How They Rob Men in Chicago" (1902), "European Rest Cure" (1904), and others. . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 5: "Doña Herlinda and Her Son" (1984, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Guadalupe Del Toto. . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 5: Early American silent films, "Blacksmith Scene," "Beheading a Chinese Prisoner," and others. . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 2: "In for Life" (1978, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Pedro Armendáriz, Jr. . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 2:30: Early American silent films, "Girls in Overalls" (1904), "The Green Goods Men" (1905), and others. . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 5: "The Realm of Fortune" (1985, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Ernesto Gómez Cruz. . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 5 and Dec. 17 at 3: Early American silent films, "Interior, New York Subway, 14th Street to 42nd Street" (1904), "The Great Mail Robbery" (1906), and others. . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 2:30: "The Summer of

"Miss Forbes" (1988, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Hanna Schygulla. . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 6: "Looks Can Be Deceiving" (1978, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Isela Vega. . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 6: Early American silent films, "How They Rob Men in Chicago," "European Rest Cure," and others. . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 3: Early American silent films, "Automobile Thieves" (1906), "The Secret of Death Valley" (1907), and others. . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 6: "Doña Herlinda and Her Son." . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 6: Early American silent films, "Girls in Overalls," "The Green Goods Men," and others.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Dec. 19 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "La Bohème" (1988, Luigi Comencini; in Italian), with Barbara Hendricks.

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Dec. 10-12 at 7: "Step Across the Border" (1990, Nicolas Humbert and Werner Penzel). . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 9: Two films by Michael Snow. . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 7: "Kinoglaz" (1925, Dziga Vertov; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 8, Dec. 14-15 at 9:30, and Dec. 16 at 8:30: Four different programs of films made by George Kuchar and students at the San Francisco Art Institute. . . . ¶ Dec. 14-15 at 8: A program of short films by John Baldessari. . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 6:30: "Film Exercises 1-5" (1943-45, John and James Whitney), "Lapis" (1966, James Whitney), "Fall of the House of Usher" (1928, Watson & Weber), and "Sausalito" (1948, Frank Stauffacher). . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 7: "Denials" (1986) and "Guilt" (1988), both by Peter Gidal.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Dec. 11 at noon: "Monterey Pop" (1968, D. A. Pennebaker). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 2:30: "The Nutcracker" (1967, Heinz Liesendahl). . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at noon: "International Sweethearts of Rhythm" (1966, Greta Schiller and Andrea Weiss) and "Jazz on a Summer's Day" (1960, Bert Stern). . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at noon: "Gimme Shelter" (1970, Albert and David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin). . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 2:30: "Love of Life" (1968, François Reichenbach).

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 81st St. (879-5500)—Dec. 15 at 4 and 6: "The Exterminating Angel" (1962, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Silvia Pinal.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Dec. 17 at 1: "The Wiz" (1978, Sidney Lumet), with Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Nipsey Russell, Richard Pryor, and Lena Horne; "Stormy Weather" (1943, Andrew Stone), with Horne, Bill Robinson, and Cab Calloway; and "Cabin in the Sky" (1943, Vincente Minnelli), with Eddie Anderson, Horne, and Ethel Waters. . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 6:30: "Home Feelings: The Struggle for a Community" (1983, Jennifer Hodge), a documentary; "The Harder They Come" (1972, Perry Henzell), with Jimmy Cliff; and "Reggae Sunsplash" (1982, Annie Rowe). . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 1 and 4: "Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary," "Huey P. Newton: Black Panther" (1968), and "Black and Blue" (1987, Lamar Williams), all documentaries. . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 6: "Bikko: Breaking the Silence" (1988, Ollie Maruma), a documentary; and "Cry Freedom" (1987, Richard Attenborough), with Denzel Washington and Kevin Kline. . . . ¶ Dec. 19 at 1 and 4:15: "The Learning Tree" (1969, Gordon Parks), with Kyle Johnson, Estelle Evans, and Dick Ward; "Almos' a Man" (1976), with LeVar Burton, Madge Sinclair, and Robert Doquil; and "Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper" (1988, St. Clair Bourne). . . . ¶ Dec. 19 at 6:30: "Glory" (1989, Edward Zwick), with Washington, Morgan Freeman, and Matthew Broderick; and "Frederick Douglass: An American Life" (1989, William Greaves).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—"To Take the Glamour Out of War: American Film Against the War in Vietnam." Dec. 15 and 18 at 2: "Viet-Flakes" (1965, Carolee Schneemann), "Time of the Locust" (1968, Peter Gessner), and "Song 23: 23rd Psalm Branch, Parts 1 and 2" (1966 and 1978, Stan Brakhage; silent). . . . ¶ Dec. 16 and 19 at 2: "Piece Mandala/End War" (1966, Paul Sharits; silent), "The Chelsea Girls" (1966, Andy Warhol), and "A Face of War" (1967, Eugene S. Jones). . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 6:15: "The Liberal War" (1972, Nick Macdonald), "Only the Beginning" (1971), and "People's War" (1969).

IN BRIEF

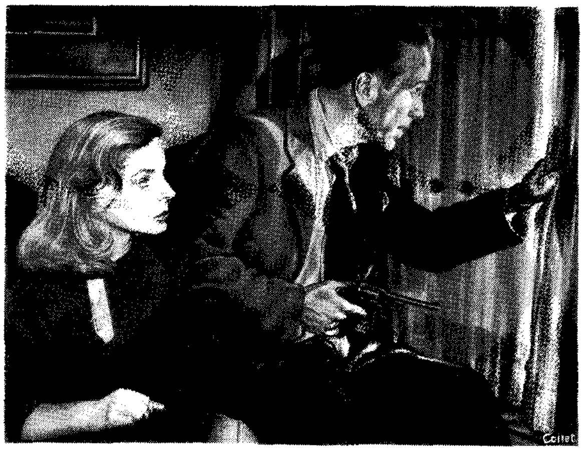
SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Angels Over Broadway (1940)—Ben Hecht wrote, produced, and, with the famous cinematographer Lee Garmes, directed this night-life story about a poor clerk (John Qualen) who is going to kill himself if he can't get three thousand dollars, and a drunken playwright (Thomas Mitchell) who takes him in charge. The playwright thinks that since sharp gamblers always let you win at poker before they trim you, the trick is to leave the game early. Rita Hayworth and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., are the young lovers who complicate the playwright's plan. Hecht's characters talk too much, but he was a compulsive gambler himself, and there's a genial, original spirit to this movie.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Dec. 16-17.)

L'Atalante (1934)—This extraordinary film was the only full-length feature directed by Jean Vigo, who died (at the age of twenty-nine) just three weeks after its première in 1934. The movie had been drastically cut by the distributor for that first release; it was partially restored in 1940, and it has now been given another major renovation. Vigo's film now looks and sounds better than ever. The screenplay, rewritten by Vigo and Albert Riéra from an original scenario by Jean Guinée, tells the simple story of a pair of newlyweds named Jean (Jean Dasté) and Juliette (Dita Parlo): he's the captain of a river barge called L'Atalante, and she's a girl from one of the villages on his route. As they travel down the river, they become impatient with each other; they are separated, then find each other again, and life resumes its intended course. Vigo treats the story the way a jazz musician treats a popular song, improvising on the melody by plunging into its carefully sequenced chords and predictable rhythms and taking them apart to see what they're made of. He is the most playful and the least rigid of the great film artists: his images seduce us with the promise of a larger, richer world and unbounded freedom to roam in it—the promise, that is, of endless stimulation, inexhaustible sensations. The best thing about this new version is that, for all the restorers' diligence, the film is still messy, imperfect, defiantly incomplete: it's a collection of inspired fragments, the sketchbook of an artist whose imagination was, and will forever remain, gloriously immature. Michel Simon plays a rambunctious old salt called Père Jules, who is the presiding spirit of the movie. Also with Louis Lefèvre and Gilles Margaritis. The stunning cinematography is by Boris Kaufman; Maurice Jaubert wrote the lovely score. In French.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/5/90.) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Avalon—In legend, Avalon is an earthly paradise. The writer-director Barry Levinson uses the name as his Rosebud: it's carved into the façade of the castlelike Baltimore apartment house where the five Krichinsky brothers, Jews who immigrated from Eastern Europe before the First World War, make their first American home. In Levinson's view, those early years were a golden age. The film is set mostly during his own childhood, in the late forties, when his parents move to the suburbs, and TV breaks up the clan's social patterns, and the surviving brothers have divided into feuding factions. The scattered fine comic moments don't make up for the wide streak of fuddy-duddyism in the notion that the family used to be the bulwark of the nation's value system. The movie is an elegy to a mythical past, and people emerge from the theatre sniffling. They've been told they're suffering from soul-sickness—the loss of unity, harmony, family music. With Elizabeth Perkins, Aidan Quinn, Kevin Pollak, Armin Mueller-Stahl, and Joan Plowright.—P.K. (10/22/90) (Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gemini, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Dec. 13.)



Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart in "The Big Sleep"

The Big Sleep (1946)—Humphrey Bogart is Raymond Chandler's private eye in this witty, incredibly complicated thriller. You may not be able to figure out the plot even after the dénouement (Chandler reported that while the film was in production William Faulkner and the other screenwriters had to appeal to him for guidance, and apparently Chandler couldn't exactly figure it out either), but it's the dialogue and the entertaining qualities of the individual sequences that make this movie. It takes place in the big city of displaced persons—the night city, where sensation is all. The action is tense and fast, and the film catches the lurid Chandler atmosphere. The characters are a collection of sophisticated monsters: blackmailers, pornographers, apathetic society girls (Lauren Bacall and Martha Vickers are a baffling pair of spoiled sisters; the latter sucks her thumb), drug addicts, nymphomaniacs (a brunette Dorothy Malone seduces the hero in what must surely be record time), murderers. All of them talk in innuendos, as if that were a new stylization of the American language, but how reassuring it is to know what the second layer of meaning refers to. Howard Hawks directed—and so well that you may even enjoy the fact that, as he says, "neither the author, the writer, nor myself knew who had killed whom."—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Dec. 18.)

Dances with Wolves—With Kevin Costner, Mary McDonnell, Graham Greene, and Rodney A. Grant; directed by Costner. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

Edward Scissorhands—With Johnny Depp, Winona Ryder, and Dianne Wiest; directed by Tim Burton. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Ziegfeld.)

Ghost—It sounds like a horror movie, but it's a romantic fairy tale. The scariest thing about it is its shamelessness. A young New York bank executive, Sam (Patrick Swayze), is killed, on the street, at a moment in his life when everything seems to be going his way. After his death, Sam sticks around, as a spirit (and Swayze stays onscreen, as a body). He attends his funeral; watches his beautiful girlfriend, Molly (Demi Moore), drift grief-stricken through the spectacular loft they had just moved into; and then devotes himself to protecting her from the people who killed him. Through a reluctant psychic (Whoopi Goldberg), he tries to communicate with Molly; later, an experienced ghost (Vincent Schiavelli) teaches him how to move objects and break stuff. In this movie, death is treated as if it were merely a

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form of disability, one of those handicaps we've seen people struggle bravely with in TV movies—something for the individual to triumph over with will power, hard work, and love. This creamy-toned fantasy, directed by Jerry Zucker from a screenplay by Bruce Joel Rubin, certainly pushes the audience's emotional buttons. It's a twentysomething hybrid of "It's a Wonderful Life" and some of the goofier, more solemn episodes of "The Twilight Zone," and there's not a trace of wit or irony in it. Its images of death have a soothing banality, like a greeting-card message from the world beyond. Also with Tony Goldwyn and Rick Aviles.—T.R. (7/30/90) (23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace, and Loews Festival; through Dec. 13. . . . ¶ Embassy; through Dec. 18. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Dec. 19, evenings only.)

GoodFellas—The director, Martin Scorsese, gives you a lift. He loves the Brooklyn organized-crime milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering. Based on Nicholas Pileggi's nonfiction book "Wiseguy," it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism and sociology presented with the brio of drama. But the three major hoods, played by Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, don't have a strong enough presence, and the movie lacks the juice and richness that come with major performances. (It's like the Howard Hawks "Scarface" without Scarface.) What you respond to is Scorsese's bravura: the filmmaking process becomes the subject of the movie. Watching it is like getting strung out on pure sensation. Paul Sorvino as Paulie and Lorraine Bracco as Karen both come through, and other performers in minor roles give the movie a frenzied, funny texture. The screenplay is by Pileggi and Scorsese; the cinematography is by Michael Ballhaus; the editing is by Thelma Schoonmaker.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Sutton, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Dec. 13.)

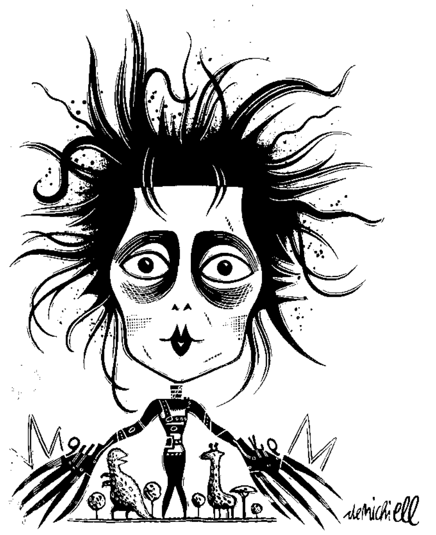
The Grifters—This adaptation of one of the punchier pulp novels by Jim Thompson retains Thompson's hardboiled pitilessness. It's about three scam artists: tough, seductive Lilly (Anjelica Huston); her son, Roy (John Cusack), who won't have anything to do with her; and his bubbly bedmate, Moira (Annette Bening), a sex fantasy come to luscious life. These chisellers never got a break and don't give anybody else a break. The director, Stephen Frears, and the scriptwriter, Donald E. Westlake, are smart enough not to attempt to make a big thing out of this L.A. *film noir*. They keep it snappy, and heighten the sexual electricity. And they smack us with discord: we're watching a form of cabaret. Huston is astounding; you can see why the son is getting even with her by throwing his life away, and Bening's two-faced little-girl quality is just what film noir thrives on. (This is a picture with two competing femmes fatales.) It's thin stuff, but it's pretty terrific. (It even has great opening titles.) With Pat Hingle giving the performance of his life, and Gailard Sartain, Stephen Tobolowsky, J. T. Walsh, Henry Jones, Charles Napier, and Sandy Baron. Cinematography by Oliver Stapleton; production design by Dennis Charles Gassner.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Beekman; through Dec. 11.)

Hairspray (1988)—The writer-director John Waters treats the message movie as a genre to be parodied, just like the teenpic. Combining the two, he comes up with a pop Dadaist musical comedy, set in Baltimore in 1962. Waters loves narrative, and he has half a dozen plots crisscrossing each other. In the middle are the spherical Mrs. Edna Turnblad (played by the male actor Divine) and her baby-blimp daughter, Tracy (Ricki Lake); they wear matching mother-and-daughter outfits. Tracy, who's the newest teen-age dancer on "The Corny Collins Show," discovers that black kids aren't allowed to take part, and she becomes a leader in the fight for integration. Meanwhile, Divine watches over Tracy and preens like a mother hen. There's a what-the-hell quality to Divine's acting, which the film needs; it would be too close to a real teenpic without it. When Divine's Edna Turnblad is onscreen in the sleeveless dresses she's partial to, the movie has something like the lunacy of a W. C. Fields in drag. With Colleen Fitzpatrick as Tracy's bitchy rival Amber, Leslie Ann Powers as shy Penny, and Michael St. Gerard, Clayton Prince, Ruth Brown, Debbie Harry, Sonny Bono, Jerry Stiller, Shawn Thompson, Ric Ocasek, Pia Zadora, Jo Ann Havrilla, and Waters himself as a sicko psychiatrist.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Dec. 16-18.)

Henry & June—Philip Kaufman's wonderful new film shows us the writers Henry Miller (Fred Ward) and Anaïs Nin (Maria de Medeiros) in the first year of their acquaintance, the period of their brief, intense love affair. It's the love story of two people who are making themselves, and each other, up as they go along; Miller and Nin are at once real people and the products of their own imaginations—collaborators in a matched pair of literary myths. And the action unfolds in and around a city that seems both itself and a figment of itself: the Paris of the thirties. Kaufman brings out the bizarre, almost monstrous comedy of their odd literary/sexual love affair; he presents it as a kind of parody image of relationships between men and women. The third major character, Miller's wife, June (Uma Thurman), is the most mysterious presence here. She seems to represent a demonic, annihilating sexual force, but by the end she's almost a tragic figure. The actors are splendid: Kaufman gets miraculously intelligent performances from Ward and de Medeiros, and Thurman—uninhibited yet also weirdly delicate—gives the picture a jolt every time she appears. The movie creates a world, and Kaufman is both affectionate toward and clear-eyed about the people who live in it; he's concerned more with *enjoying* his characters, in all their contradictions, than with explaining them. The material plays as rich, dark erotic farce—a comedy about the duplicity of writers. Also with Richard E. Grant (as Nin's husband) and Kevin Spacey. The screenplay, by Kaufman and his wife, Rose, is based on Nin's diary. Superb cinematography by Philippe Rousselot.—T.R. (10/8/90) (Baronet, Art Greenwich Twin, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas, and Metro Cinema; through Dec. 11. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex; starting Dec. 12. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; starting Dec. 12, evenings only.)

Kiss Me Kate (1953)—A backstage farce set during the staging of a musical version of "The Taming of the Shrew," with Kathryn Grayson and Howard Keel as the warring stars. Grayson's trilling is something to contend with, and so is her busy, amateurish performance, and there's a lot of badly placed rambunctious comedy from just about everybody. But there's also a marvellous Cole Porter score, with such songs as "Where Is the Life That Late I Led?," "Why Can't You Behave?," "Too Darn Hot," "I've Come to Wive It Wealthily in Padua," and "Always True to You in My Fashion." And there is Howard Keel, with his strong baritone and his good-hearted leering; a dark goatee gives him more chin, and with his great height he looks hilarious in Petruchio's striped pants. And there is the dancing of Bob Fosse, Tommy Rall, and Bobby Van—their "From This Moment On" number, choreographed by Fosse, is one of the high points of movie-musical history; in its speed and showmanship one can see the Fosse style in its earliest film realization. This sequence more than balances out the grossly embarrassing moments, such as the one when Keel tells Grayson, who is about to quit acting and go off with a Texan (Willard Parker), that she belongs in the theatre. Maybe because Grayson looks so uncomfortable—so aware of her shortcomings as an actress—Ann Miller, who obviously enjoys performing, comes off as lively and amusing; she doesn't just do her usual ticktock tapping, because she's working with those three leaping male dancers, and with Carol Haney, too. Directed by George Sidney, with dances staged by Hermes Pan. The Cole Porter Broadway show, with a book by Samuel and Bella Spewack, was adapted to M-G-M's requirements by Dorothy Kingsley—i.e., it was cleaned up and overtamed. (Filmed, and shown here, in double-system 3-D.)—P.K. (*Film Forum*.)

The Krays—The twins Ronnie and Reggie Kray, a pair of East End thugs who operated several posh night clubs in London in the nineteen-sixties, are underworld legends for the English. Most Americans don't know much about them; and after two hours of watching this picture we still don't. The director, Peter Medak, and the screenwriter,



Johnny Depp in “Edward Scissorhands”

Philip Ridley, take an arty, elliptical approach to what should be superbly tawdry gangster-movie material. The filmmakers walk up to us with big, mean-looking metaphors in their hands and open fire. The Krays (played by Gary and Martin Kemp, who are brothers but not twins) wander through the movie looking sinister and rather dazed, as if they had forgotten who they were supposed to be. And who can blame them? They spend most of their time gazing into mirrors and telling each other their dreams; they're so burdened with meaning they seem unable to *do* anything. The bizarre, dreamlike tone might have worked—sort of—if the ideas in the script weren't so dopey. The picture advances, for instance, the remarkable theory that the Krays' sociopathic natures were created by the Blitz and an excess of love from their mother. That's the sort of thing Medak and Ridley give us in lieu of information, action, narrative; it won't do. Also with Billie Whitelaw as the twins' mother, Violet Kray. She's a wonderful actress; she no more deserves this movie than Vi deserved her terrible sons.—T.R. (Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

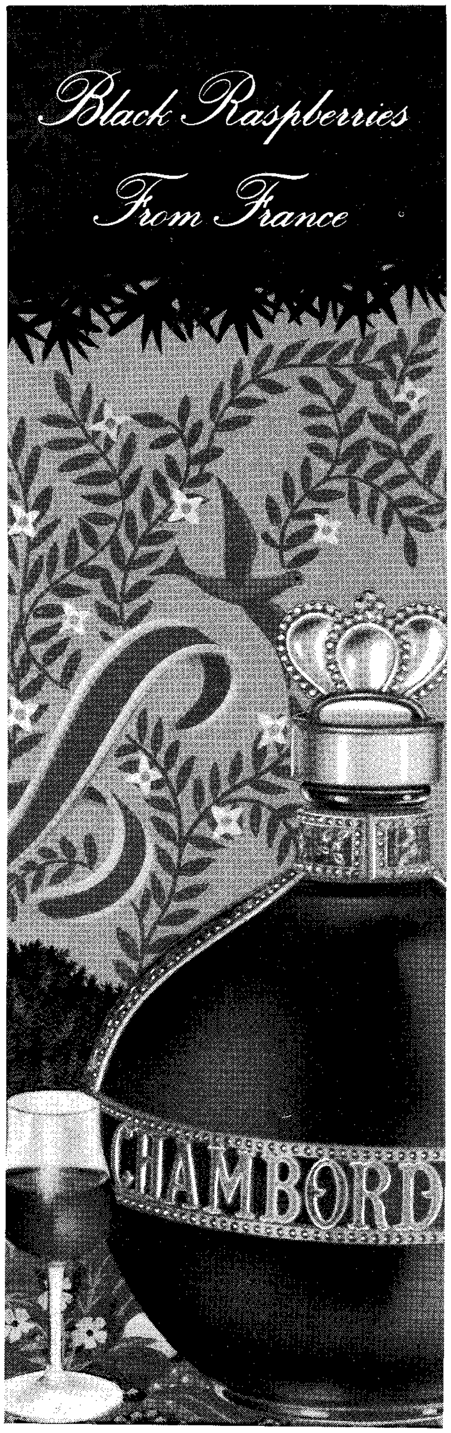
The Lady Vanishes (1938)—Alfred Hitchcock's murder mystery about a fussy, jolly old lady who boards a train and disappears on it is directed with such skill and velocity that it has come to represent the quintessence of screen suspense. It provides some of the finest examples of Hitchcock touches—little shocks and perversities of editing and detail. The hero is played by a tall, callow young man making his first major film appearance—Michael Redgrave; the heroine is Margaret Lockwood, and the lady is Dame May Whitty. With Paul Lukas, Cecil Parker, Margaretta Scott, Catherine Lacey, Mary Clare, Linden Travers, Googie Withers, and the team of Naunton Wayne and Basil Radford doing a parody of the “jolly good show” type of Britisher. Screenplay by Sidney Gilliat, Frank Launder, and Alma Reville, based on the novel “The Wheel Spins,” by Ethel Lina White.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Dec. 14-15.)

Longtime Companion—The screenwriter, Craig Lucas, and the director, Norman René, track the effects of AIDS on the lives of eight people: seven gay men and a straight woman who is a lifelong friend of one of the men. The filmmakers focus on one day in each year of the epidemic, from 1981 through 1989, and the mournful progress of the decade is expressed by the gaps between the annual episodes: the cast of characters keeps getting smaller, and at the end only the woman and three of the men are left. The movie is sometimes very effective, but it's often blander and more simplistic than it should be. It seems determined to convey a wholesome, “normal” image of gay life to straight America—so all its characters are pleasant and good-looking, and they're all white, too. The only really interesting characters are a middle-aged couple, David (Bruce Davison) and Sean (Mark Lamos). The natural protagonist of the drama is David, who, when Sean gets sick, cares for him with extraordinary patience and tenderness. Davison's performance (in probably the best role he has ever had) is wonderfully dry and precise. There's a strange reserve in his demeanor even when he's being goofy, so the strength he shows at the bedside of his dying lover is both heartbreaking and absolutely convincing. It's a well-written role, and Davison does a beautiful piece of acting. After he, too, disappears—between episodes—the movie seems to have lost the best part of itself. Also with Campbell Scott, Stephen Caffrey, Patrick Cassidy, Mary-Louise Parker, John Dossett, and Dermot Mulroney—T.R. (5/21/90) (Cinema Village; starting Dec. 19.)

Miller's Crossing—A cold, clever period gangster movie by the Coen brothers. (Ethan produces and Joel directs, from a script they've written together.) Essentially, it's an academic exercise, a pastiche of the intricately plotted, morally ambiguous crime fiction of Dashiell Hammett; the screenplay incorporates large chunks of “Red Harvest” and “The Glass Key,” with a notion or two from “The Maltese Falcon” thrown in. The Coens have certainly done their homework: their movie is a brilliant reading of Hammett. But that's all it is. The picture seems to have no life of its own, and the Coens' formal control and meticulously crafted ironies become, after a while, rather depressing. This is not so much a gangster movie as an extended, elaborate allusion to one. With Gabriel Byrne, Marcia Gay Harden, John Turturro, Jon Polito, J. E. Freeman, and Albert Finney (who is, by a long shot, the most entertaining performer in the movie).—T.R. (Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Angelika Film Center; through Dec. 13.)

Mr. & Mrs. Bridge—An adaptation, by the Merchant Ivory team (the director James Ivory, the producer Ismail Merchant, and the writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala), of Evan S. Connell's novels about the painfully respectable Bridge family of Kansas City. Walter and India Bridge (Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward) are pure exemplars of the middle: they're middle-aged and middle-class; they live in a medium-sized city in virtually the dead center of the United States; and they are neither truly happy nor consciously unhappy. They're monsters of moderation. At the beginning of the film, Ivory seems eerily in tune with the novels' distinctive sensibility: the domestic vignettes are sharply dramatized and succeed each other with an even, confident rhythm; the nuances of behavior, language, and décor register and then resonate satisfyingly; the tone is exactly right, cool but not condescending. The picture gets by, initially, on its strange mood of chilling coziness, and when we tire of that—and we do, because it doesn't change or develop—the actors keep us engaged a while longer. Newman doesn't try to soften the character, or to distance himself from it with exaggerated effects, and his scrupulousness pays off. The character seems not more likable but more human than it does in the novels: by very simple means, Newman enables us to understand Mr. Bridge's insensitivity and emotional ineptitude. And Woodward, too, gives a delicate, subtle performance: she embodies a foolish woman vividly and unpatronizingly. But the screenplay retains the static quality of the books' construction, so at a certain point the scenes begin to feel arbitrary. And Ivory's perspective on the material seems to become clouded by a storm of minutiae—a surfeit of period detail. (The action takes place in the late thirties and early forties.) In the end, the Bridges aren't large enough either to move us or to terrify us: they're the Ambersons without the magnificence.—T.R. (12/3/90) (Cinema I.)

Postcards from the Edge—This tale of a sorrowful, wisecracking starlet (Meryl Streep) whose brassy, boozing former-star mother (Shirley MacLaine) started her on sleeping pills when she was nine is camp without the zest of camp. It's camp played borderline straight—a druggy-Cinderella movie about an unformed girl who has to go past despair to find herself. The director, Mike Nichols, is a parodist who feigns sincerity, and his tone keeps slipping around. What's clear is that we're meant to be enthralled by the daughter's radiant face, her refinement, her honesty. Nichols keeps the camera on Streep as if to prove that he can make her a popular big star—a new Crawford or Bette Davis. (She remains distant, emotionally atonal.) The tacky, bright-colored film—a near-plotless version of a woman's picture—is weightless,



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yet it's watchable. Its jadedness appeals to the narcissism of show-biz insiders and to the would-be insider in the rest of us. (Nichols is acclaimed for being hip to the Zeitgeist.) —P.K. (10/22/90) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Reversal of Fortune—An entertainingly trashy sick-joke docudrama about how Claus von Bülow's conviction for trying to kill his super-rich wife was overturned on appeal through the brainpower of the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and his team of students and former students. Jeremy Irons' von Bülow is a pop conception of a decadent aristocrat, and the crowd-pleasing satirical subtext is that the heirs and heiresses of the great fortunes are useless, bored, unloving, and unloved. The fun here is that Irons' performance is a masterly conceit. His von Bülow is a depraved cuckoo; he simply can't resist playing ghoulish comedian and making Dershowitz (Ron Silver) his stooge. The script, by Nicholas Kazan, is skillfully constructed, but it's based on Dershowitz's book about the case, and he's the protagonist—the crusading lawyer searching for evidence of innocence. Silver's Dershowitz seems to be overdosing on proud sentimental Jewishness. (That this is a positive stereotype makes it no less a stereotype.) The direction, by Barbet Schroeder, is assured but often impersonal and emptily energetic. With Glenn Close (very effective as Sunny von Bülow, the comatose narrator), Christine Baranski as Andrea Reynolds, Julie Hagerty (uncredited) as Alexandra Isles, and Stephen Mailer, Annabella Sciorra, Uta Hagen, and Fisher Stevens. Music by Mark Isham.—P.K. (11/19/90) (8th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ 57th St. Playhouse; through Dec. 11. . . . ¶ Loews 19th Street East 6, 68th Street Playhouse, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Dec. 18. . . . ¶ Eastside Cinema; starting Dec. 12.)

Journalists owe Cary Grant a special debt. As Walter Burns in "His Girl Friday" (Howard Hawks' 1940 version of "The Front Page," playing December 13-15 at the Biograph Cinema), Grant gives a fresh pressing to the rumpled image of the newspaperman. Here is the daily editor at apex —as verbal buccaneer, as political mover and shaker, as manipulator and genius. Grant's Walter Burns is a man who has his whole fist on the pulse of the nation. Visually, Grant cuts one of his boldest figures, from the slashing tilt of his head to his springy acrobatic gait. No actor is better at seeming to pull away in three directions at once without losing his balance. It's a trick Grant executes by angular poses and even more by his ability to hint at a solid center of gravity with his brilliant, mysterious eyes, curling brow, and expressive mouth.

Grant anchors this swift, supremely crafty testament to snappy patter. Charles Lederer reshaped the Ben Hecht–Charles MacArthur original (with some help from Hecht himself), but at the core it's the same story about on-the-job loyalty, with Burns refusing to let go of his ace reporter, Hildy Johnson, who hopes to quit and get married. While Burns and Johnson spar, a mild-mannered cop-killing anarchist becomes a political football. Burns suspects that Johnson won't be able to stay away from the controversy. The difference in this version is that Hildy is a divorcée who used to be married to Burns. Grant and Rosalind Russell (who plays Hildy) share wisecracks the way Astaire and Rogers share dance steps. In "His Girl Friday," Russell is just as nimble and aggressive as Grant. And in this movie, likes attract.

The Sheltering Sky—With Debra Winger, John Malkovich, and Campbell Scott; directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. (Reviewed in this issue.) (57th St. Playhouse; starting Dec. 12.)

To Sleep with Anger—A domestic comedy with an unusually dense texture. It's shot straightforwardly, in a style that appears realistic almost to the point of banality, and yet right from the start there's something unsettling about its plainness: Charles Burnett, who wrote and directed, keeps hinting that things are not necessarily what they seem. Gideon (Paul Butler) and Suzie (Mary Alice) are a middle-aged black couple who live in Los Angeles; their roots, however, are in the rural South, and they've retained quite a few of the customs, values, and superstitions of the culture they were brought up in. The story gets going when a friend of theirs from back home appears on their doorstep; they invite him to stay with them awhile, and he does. This unexpected guest, Harry (Danny Glover), turns out to be a gifted confidence man, with a sharp eye for human weakness; he's a grinning, honey-tongued demon. He uses his backcountry wisdom with sinister, obscure intent, for purposes that Burnett, cunningly, allows to remain ambiguous. The presence of Harry gives the realistic surface of the movie a vibrant strangeness: he seems to transform everything that happens in these clean, comfortable living rooms and kitchens into dark rituals performed in the woods in the dead of night. The picture has a risky, complex tone: it's a comedy, because the family's threatened world is set right in the end, but there are moments along the way when the intimations of unseen controlling forces—both in Glover's elegantly suggestive performance and in the eerie, calm precision of Burnett's direction—give us the creeps.—T.R. (11/5/90) (Angelika Film Center.)

Tune in Tomorrow . . .—The romantic, surreal farce material is William Boyd's adaptation of Mario Vargas Llosa's "Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter." The director, Jon Amiel, seems to like it so much that he gets carried away just watching the actors. He doesn't set up the jokes, and the movie is a mess, but it's a whimsical, pleasant mess: luckily, we like to watch these people, too. At the center, Peter Falk is the carelessly demented radio-serial writer who interferes in people's lives for the sake of his soapy art. The idea seems to be that the scriptwriter puts real life into soap opera and then the real people imitate soap opera—or something like that. Falk brings a delirium to his role—he fuses high and low comedy. There are amusing bits with radio actors whose faces and voices don't mesh; there are also some neat parodies of the radio listeners' fantasies. The cast includes Keanu Reeves with slicked-down hair and Barbara Hershey chewing gum (as hot-blooded lovers), and Peter Gallagher, Elizabeth McGovern, John Larroquette, Richard B. Shull, Henry Gibson, Dan Hedaya, Buck Henry, Hope Lange, and Irving Metzman. The setting (it's Lima, Peru, in the novel) is New Orleans in 1951.—P.K. (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema 3.)

Vincent & Theo—The director, Robert Altman, and the screenwriter, Julian Mitchell, give us an interpretation of the bond that helps to keep Vincent alive while it tears Theo apart. Vincent is obsessive about his painting; Theo is obsessive about Vincent and about his own inability to sell Vincent's work and help him —he can give him only a pittance. This double Passion-play movie is very different from the other Altman movies (even allowing for how different they are from each other). The theme—the bitter entanglement of art and commerce—is Altman's lifelong theme, and, staying with it strictly in terms of the van Gogh brothers, he's able to release his own feelings about how an artist's frustrations lead him to acts of self-destructive fury —cutting off his ear to spite his face. It's a movie about two sensualists made by a sensualist, who understands that their bond of love of art is also a bond of shared rage at the world of commerce. This daring film works on its own relentless, celebratory terms. With Tim Roth, whose acting is a form of kinetic discharge, as Vincent and Paul Rhys as Theo.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Loews Fine Arts.)

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Vancouver

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(Minaki Lodge)

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(Las Colinas)

Maui
(Wailea)

Santa Barbara
(The Biltmore)

Nevis, W.I.
(Late 1990)

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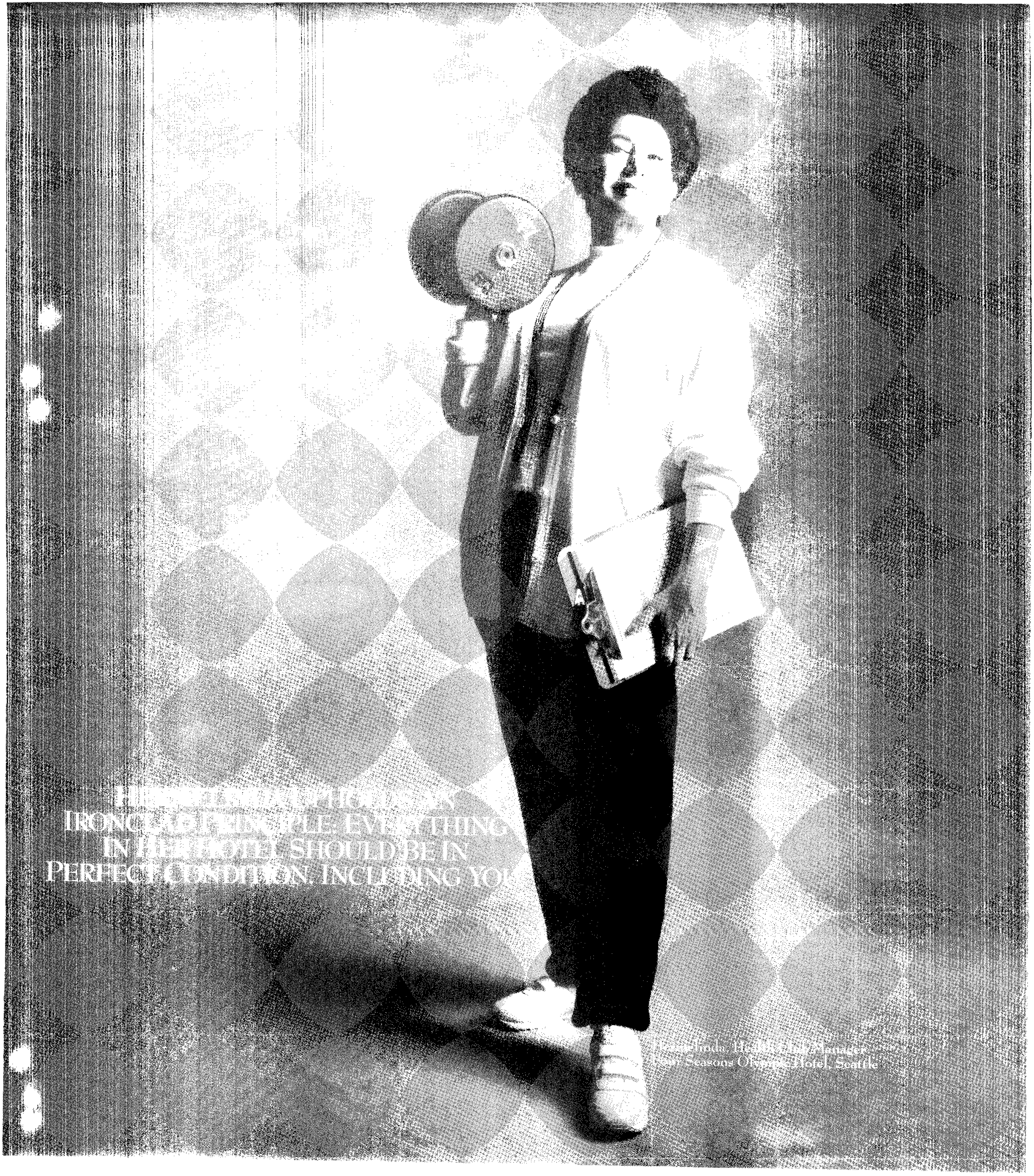
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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

ACCORDING to a poll recently taken by the *Times*, a surprisingly high percentage of black Americans believe that the drug crisis, which continues to devastate our cities even as it fades from the news, is a government conspiracy to harm black people. But perhaps this should not come as such a surprise. The Office of National Drug Control Policy was created by Congress in 1988, over the objections of the Reagan Administration, to coördinate the government's anti-drug efforts, and early last year William Bennett was named its first director by President Bush. Unaccountably dubbed "the drug czar," Mr. Bennett brought to the job no background in public health or law enforcement, experience in either of which might have at least proved helpful. He had been Secretary of Education under Ronald Reagan—a post in which he gave a self-contradictory performance. He toured the country tirelessly, preaching the importance of education with great flamboyance but all the while passionately defending the Reagan efforts to slash federal spending on education. Mr. Bennett's only concrete ideas for improving our educational system seemed to turn on the virtues of school prayer and tuition tax credits, notions with distinctly more political than pedagogical import. The long, frightening decline in the quality of American public schooling continued unchecked.

As the nation's anti-drug chief, Mr. Bennett was no less flamboyant and no less ineffectual. He took office with a dramatic announcement that the District of Columbia, which was suffering at the time from a ferocious wave of drug-related violence, would be the "test case" for his policies: he would concentrate his forces there, and begin to control the drug problem in the nation's capital first. Last month, when Mr. Bennett announced that he intended to leave his job, the District of Columbia was about to break its own record for homicides for the second year in a row, and drugs have remained, according to the police, the leading cause of killings in the city.

Bob Martinez, the outgoing governor of Florida, who is President Bush's choice to replace Mr. Bennett as drug-policy director, seems to have no more qualifications for the job than his predecessor had. Although Florida has been struggling with some of the severest drug problems in the country, Governor Martinez has, according to a recent editorial in the Miami *Herald*, "short-changed drug education and treatment, preferring instead to stress 'solutions' such as razing crack houses, imposing capital punishment on traffickers and mandating drug-testing." Governor Martinez failed to win re-election last month, a loss that President Bush apparently felt keenly; he had visited Florida several times to stump for the incumbent, whose campaign chairman happened to be Jeb Bush, the President's son. When the President announced that he had selected Mr. Martinez as his new anti-drug chief, he included among the nominee's accomplishments the macabre fact that he had "signed more than a hundred and thirty death warrants." For a moment, it was as if the President were filling the post of chief executioner.

William Bennett, meanwhile, has been named chairman of the Republican National Committee. Reporting this appointment, the *Times* quoted a Republican official as saying, "Some of Bennett's friends were concerned that this wasn't the right thing for him: from spokesman for the nation's children to a party attack dog." In fact, Mr. Bennett had already begun the transformation. During this past election season, he campaigned vigorously for Republican candidates—notably Senator Jesse Helms, of North Carolina, who in his campaign against Harvey Gantt, a black liberal, made a number of crude appeals to white racial fears. After Mr. Bennett was named Republican chairman, he defended Mr. Helms' campaign tactics as "perfectly legitimate." But was it perfectly legitimate for the "spokesman for the nation's children"—the spokesman for black children particularly, perhaps, since they suffer disproportionately from the drug crisis—to be participating in a blatantly anti-black political campaign? Mr. Bennett's metamorphosis from drug fighter to political operative was so swift and blurred that the question was scarcely

EXPRSS
SHOE REPAIR
CHINESE

asked. In any case, it could be asked *only by somebody who failed to understand* that the drug czardom is not in fact a job, with certain duties and responsibilities, but just a political plum.

Perhaps the black Americans who tell polltakers that the drug crisis is a conspiracy to harm them understand this perfectly well. Certainly they—along with anyone else who hears of it—cannot help understanding the significance of the finding, recently announced by the National Center for Health Statistics, that life expectancy for black people in the United States has dropped substantially over the past six years. It's hard to imagine a more basic indictment of our nation's social policies than such a trend. Another recent study shows that blacks, who account for thirteen per cent of the American population, suffer almost eighty per cent of what public-health statisticians classify as deaths that could have been prevented medically. Life expectancy for black males has been falling fastest of all. Dr. Louis Sullivan, the Bush Administration's own Secretary for Health and Human Services, said last year, "Not since slavery has so much calamity and ongoing catastrophe been visited on black males." Drugs and drug-related violence are major contributors to this calamity, of course. But actually coming to grips with the drug catastrophe is a very different matter from simply making political hay out of it, and the Bush Administration seemingly sees no political advantage to be gained from addressing the crisis seriously. This is not a plot. This is neglect.

• •

Camels

WHERE do the camels in the Radio City Christmas pageant spend their off-hours? How do they get on with the sheep and the donkeys? Are they thrilled to be in New York for the holiday season, or would they rather be wintering in a warmer latitude? This was the thrust of a hard-hitting interview that we conducted the other morning with Leonard Brook, co-proprietor of the Dawn Animal Agency (and of an animal sanctuary, in Orange County, New York, with which it shares acreage), while he and the three camels employed in the current pageant went for their daily stroll outside the Music Hall.

Mr. Brook, a tall, friendly-looking man with a scraggly gray beard, which serves him well when he appears onstage as an Arab herdsman, takes the position that if you are going out walking with a string of camels in midtown Manhattan an early hour is best. Around 6 A.M., he has found, Sixth Avenue conveys the vast, lonely feel of the desert more than it does at, say, high noon, and the danger of a collision between a camel and an office worker is considerably reduced. But if circumstances conspire to set Mr. Brook's schedule back, forcing him to exercise his camels in the thick of the morning rush hour, he is a man who will not quiver at the challenge.

"Camel coming through! Camel coming through!" Mr. Brook shouted as we swept around the corner of Fifty-first Street onto Sixth at eight-thirty last Monday morning—a morning on which the camels, to say nothing of Mr. Brook himself, had been glad to catch up on their sleep after five performances the previous day. The sidewalk before us teemed with pedestrians, but within an instant a path suitable for camels had magically formed. "Excuse us," Mr. Brook said, belatedly apologizing for the vigor with which he had merged into the traffic flow.

"Yes, I will excuse you," said a hefty young man who had thrown himself against the nearest wall, the way subway-track workers do when a train enters the station.

The truth is, Mr. Brook's camels—Philip, Debbie, and Azurri—are fond of people. "They are, without doubt, the best camels you'll find anywhere," he said. "They don't do the proverbial spitting or biting. They're just nice, nice animals."

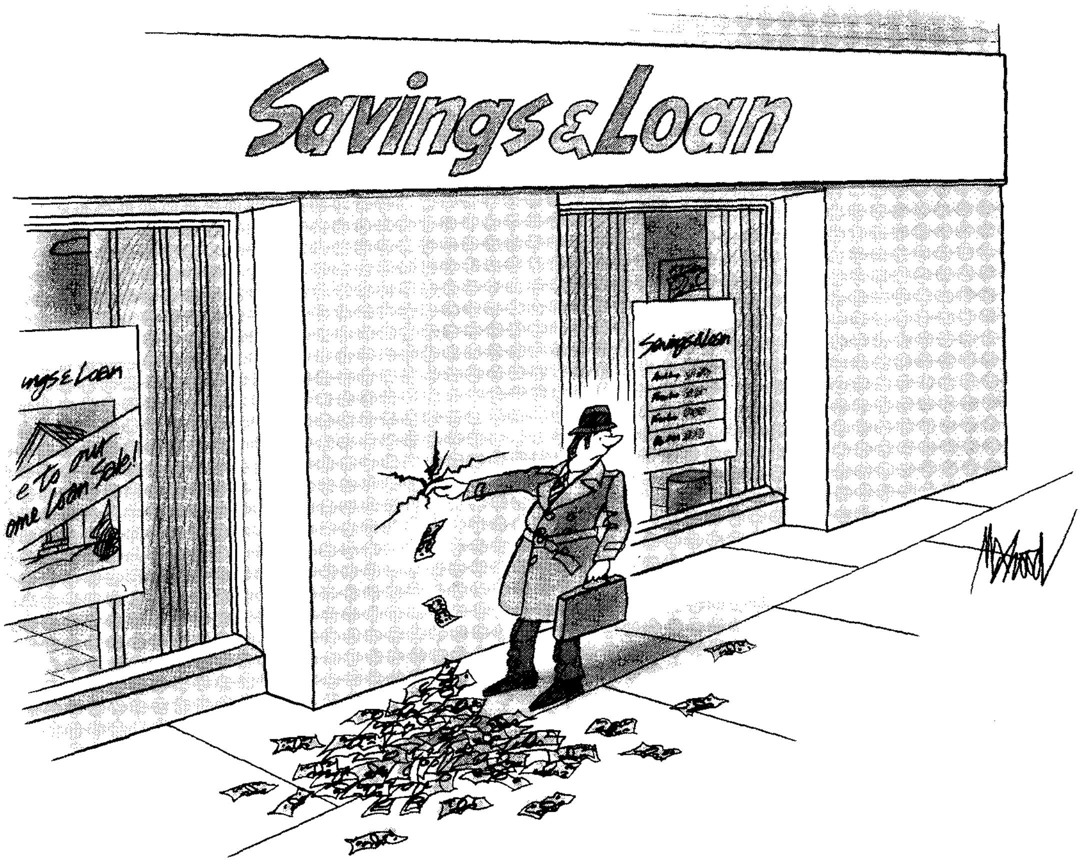
Mr. Brook often runs into people who express concern about the ability of desert-dwelling creatures to withstand a northern winter, but such concern, he says, is misplaced. "If you leave camels out in the winter, they'll grow a thick coat," he explained, inviting us to feel Azurri's plush brown coat. "It can get pretty cold in the desert at night." Philip, Debbie, and Azurri spent their formative years under the care of Mr. Brook, his wife, Bunnie, and her sister, Barbara, who jointly run the animal agency and its allied shelter. They have about seven hundred animals—including horses, dogs, domestic cats, big cats, reindeer, llamas, elephants, pigeons, rabbits, ducks, a zebra, and a kangaroo—on two hundred acres. Only a few dozen are in show business; the rest are, as Mr. Brook put it, "living out their lives in peace."

Eve Olitsky

In the Christmas pageant, the camels deliver the three kings (and their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh) to Mary and Joseph. Draped in magnificent satin blankets, they enter stage right, exit stage left, then make a second entrance, to form part of the tableau for the last fifteen minutes of the pageant. The script gives Philip the added responsibility of lying down in front of Mary and Joseph. Lying down, Mr. Brook told us, is a delicate business for a camel. Indeed—and this fact he confided with ill-concealed disapproval—Radio City used to employ a *fake* camel (a "roll-on") at that point in the proceedings.

Over the years, Mr. Brook has supplied animals for numerous movies, plays, and operas, but the annual Radio City job is one of his biggest moneymakers. "So the camels help support a lot of the other animals," he said. "I think they would be very proud if they understood that." He is also in charge of the other animal members of the cast: the dog that pops out of a gift box at the beginning of the show; the horse that pulls the carriage in which Ebenezer Scrooge rides to Bob Cratchit's house, about halfway through; and the six sheep and two donkeys that, along with the camels, figure in the Nativity sequence. All thirteen of the animals, along with Mr. Brook and three employees of his, live backstage at the Music Hall for the nine weeks of the engagement—quite peaceably, he says.

A lot of children would love to grow up to be Leonard Brook. The young Leonard Brook was not one of them, however. "I was going to be a painter," he said as the camels began a fifth circuit of the block. "I had this loft on Seventeenth Street. One day, I just missed the light on Sixth Avenue, and this other guy also just missed the light. He had a collie with him. I said, 'Gee, that's a nice dog.' He said, 'Would you like to buy him?' So I bought him. Then I took the collie for a walk in Greenwich Village, and I met a girl who had a Russian wolfhound. We became friends, and she asked me if I wanted to meet some friends of hers who lived in the country—in Mount Vernon." The procession turned the corner onto Sixth Avenue again. "Camel coming through! Camel coming through!" Mr. Brook bellowed. "And that's how I met my wife and her sister. They'd been taking in dogs and cats from the time they were children, and they had about thirty-five animals by then." Branching out into the entertainment business was his idea, Mr. Brook said, and "we just grew, like Topsy." He added, "If I had made that light on Sixth Avenue, my life would have been very different."



Rildia Bee

THE invitation said to come to the Fort Worth Club on the evening of Sunday, October 14th, to celebrate the ninety-fourth birthday of Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn. So we set out for Texas. We love a party anyway, and this one promised to be special. Besides being older than the twentieth century, Rildia Bee (as she is called both formally and affectionately) is a descendant of more than a hundred years' worth of prominent Southern Baptists, Democrats, and educators. She was for many years a concert pianist and a piano teacher and the wife of an oilman, and her son, Van, is a famous pianist. You could also call her a social activist, which she is, but in a manner more quiet and practical than the term usually suggests. When she founded a mission for the homeless in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1937, she did it, she says, "because it was the right thing to do and somebody had to do it."

Her fame in her own right, by comparison with her son's global renown, diminishes mile by mile in any direction away from Texas and Louisiana, but increases again to considerable proportions inside the smaller international world of concert music, where it is well known that she studied piano with Arthur Friedheim (who studied with Franz Liszt and Anton Rubinstein), that she was her son's only teacher until he was seventeen, and that it was she who taught him the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1, which when he played it in 1958 transformed him into a folk hero. It's less well known that four years later, when Van ended a triumphant recital in the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, and the audience was clamoring for encores, he sent Rildia Bee out to play the Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 and an étude by Moszkowski. She blew the lid right off the place.

On the Saturday night before the party, Van invited a few friends and relatives over to the house for a toast to Rildia Bee at the stroke of midnight—the moment she officially turned ninety-four. The house looked as though an inauguration were about to take place. There were balloons and pots of roses everywhere. Rildia Bee came downstairs a few minutes before twelve, looking spectacular in a long red dress and with her silver-gold hair swept up à la Tebaldi. When Van seated himself at the piano to play "Happy Birthday," she said, "Make it sing, honey."

Later, Rildia Bee was in an expansive mood, and seemed happy to reminisce about her career and her discovery of her son's gift. "I had finished teaching for the day, and had dismissed my student," she said. "After I'd gone into the kitchen, I heard him going over his piece again. I went back to tell him his mother was waiting for him, and discovered it was Van—three years old—sitting there, playing from memory. He'd never had a lesson, couldn't read a note of music. But he played the little piece perfectly, and I knew this was a good sign." After that, she gave him a formal lesson every morning and supervised his practice time every afternoon, all the while continuing to teach her regular piano students and singing as a soprano soloist at the local Baptist church.

What Rildia Bee did not go on to say is that in 1945 she took her son, then eleven, to play for José Iturbi, who was at the height of his Hollywood fame. "What should I do about my son's training?" she asked. Iturbi said, "He already has the best teacher anyone could have." When Van won the Kosciusko Foundation's Chopin Prize, in 1952, the august Isabelle Vengerova was a member of the jury. She knew everyone in the world of piano, and had championed the young Prokofiev against the reactionary old guard at the Imperial Conservatory in St. Petersburg in 1914. But she wanted to know "*Who* is this young man's teacher?" After Van won the 1958 Tchaikovsky Competition, his teacher at Juilliard, Rosina Lhévinne, became the most sought-after piano teacher in America. She would accept without audition any pupil whom Rildia Bee sent to her.

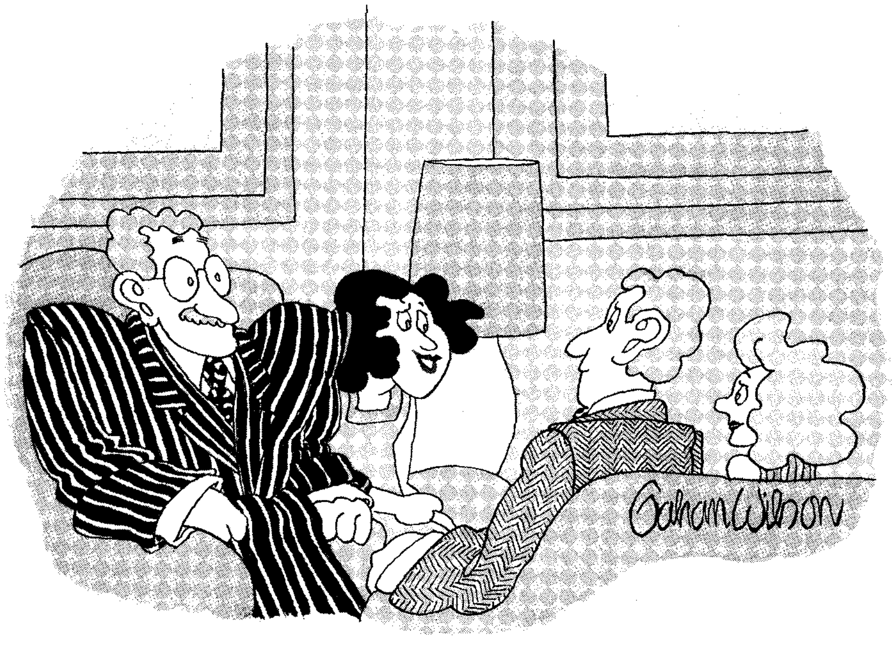
There were six hundred guests at the party at the Fort Worth Club on Sunday evening, and they rose from their tiny gilt chairs when Rildia Bee came in. John Giordano and the Fort Worth Symphony struck up "The Star-Spangled Banner," and then they played one of Rildia Bee's favorites, a suite of waltzes from "Der Rosenkavalier." Roberta Peters, perky and glamorous in rose-red chiffon, sang some songs from Viennese operettas, and a few by Irving Berlin. A birthday cake the size of the Chrysler Building was rolled in. Rildia Bee blew out her candles and stood up to speak.

She seemed a little shaky at first—shaken with emotion. She thanked everybody for coming, and said how much she loved us all and how lucky she was to have so many good friends and such a wonderful life. Perhaps it was standing in front of an audience that did it—anyway, she began to grow more invigorated, and stood taller, and her voice got stronger. Before you knew it, she was sounding like an orator. "Musical inspiration is the gift of God," she said, and we could tell that she was just getting good and wound up. "Aim high!" she said. "Consider yourself capable of great things!" Her words, her manner, her tone ignited the audience. Everyone shouted and applauded. Rildia Bee grew more radiant. You could see she was a woman accustomed to authority. She spoke like an evangelist and an educator and a granddaughter of the man who was Sam Houston's preacher, all of which she is. She waited for the din to subside. "Now," she said, "let's have some birthday cake."

I'll Test My Log

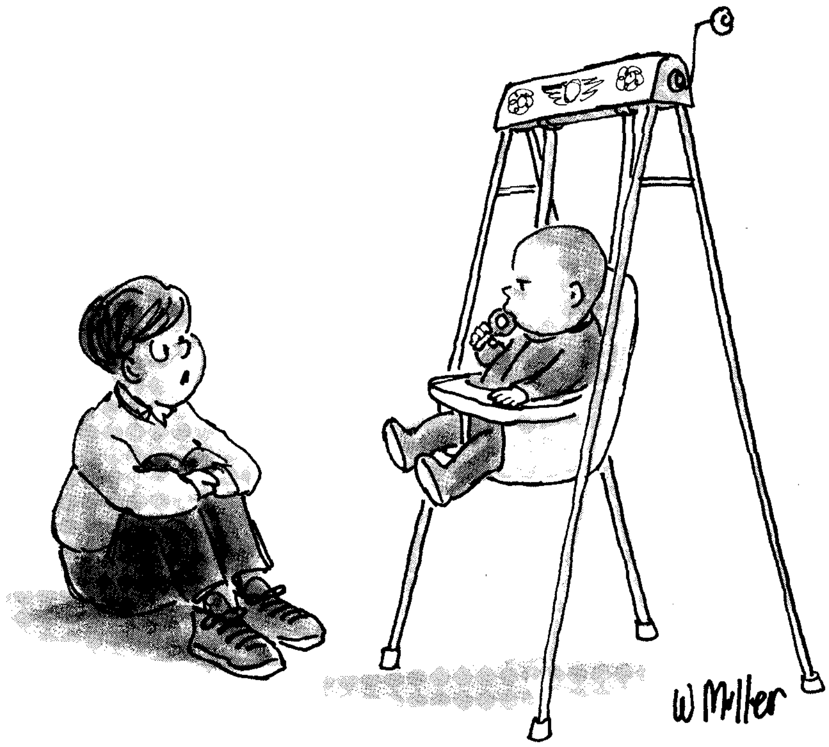
OUR friend who visited "Twin Peaks" country, in the Pacific Northwest, last summer has sent us another report, from nearer at hand:

All things "Twin Peaks" are in flux right now, with Laura Palmer's murder solved, and with the show's hipness rating—not to mention its Nielsen ratings—wavering back and forth between de rigueur and passé. What's definite is that you should never publish anything about "Twin Peaks" unless you want to become an informal clearing house for rumors and theories about the show. This fall, a lot of people went out of their way to assure me that Laura Palmer wasn't really dead. For instance, a few days after the season première, in October, a friend (who was sure that several sly references to Hitchcock's "Vertigo" proved that Madeleine was actually Laura) sent me a column by the television critic for the Los Angeles *Times* which maintained that a frame-by-frame analysis of the flashback to Laura's murder revealed that, instead of finishing Laura off, the evil phantasm Bob had actually been performing CPR. By the time it was resolved, once and for all—in the gruesome and hypnotic dénouement of this season's seventh episode—that Leland Palmer, possessed by Bob, had killed his own daughter, Laura, I had become so accustomed to manning the "Twin Peaks" desk, as it were, that I automatically decided to attend the "Return to 'Twin Peaks' " seminar, an event held as part of the first Rémy Martin City Mosaic Performing Arts Festival.



"Harvey's staying with shoulders."

On the rainy Saturday afternoon before Thanksgiving, four hundred people—a capacity crowd—showed up at Florence Gould Hall, on East Fifty-ninth Street. The lights dimmed, and after a sonorous announcer mentioned the sponsor and the purpose of the festival—"to honor and preserve the best our culture creates"—the seminar moderator was introduced. When the audience heard that it was Mimi Torchin, the editor of *Soap Opera Weekly*, all pretense of solemnity disappeared. (The advance publicity for the event had mentioned the possible participation of a psychologist, an astrologer, and a critic.) Ms. Torchin led out a parade of "Twin Peaks" celebrities, and they sat down in a row on folding chairs: Mark Frost, the show's co-creator (with David Lynch); Jennifer Lynch, David Lynch's daughter and the author of "The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer"; Dana Ashbrook, who plays the bad-boy football star, Bobby Briggs (his appearance brought forth a teen-idol scream); Wendy Robie, who plays the one-eyed



"*It's a shame you missed the eighties.*"

• •

strongwoman, Nadine (she was surprisingly pretty without her eye patch); David Patrick Kelly, who plays Jerry Horne, aide-de-camp and younger brother of the scheming Twin Peaks tycoon, Benjamin Horne; and, finally—this inspired an ovation—Catherine Coulson, the Log Lady.

Ms. Torchin got things off to a brisk start with a series of Sally Jessy Raphaelesque questions for Mr. Frost. Does Leland know that he's possessed by Bob? No. Did Laura know that Bob was Leland? That was stuff we'd be finding out in the next couple of weeks.

As the discussion moved along, facts and trivia dear to the hearts of "Twin Peaks" weenies began to accumulate. As Lynch and Frost first conceived the show, it was set in North Dakota. David Lynch doesn't remember his dreams. ("Most of his visions are waking visions," according to Mr. Frost. "He called me up earlier this year and said"—he imitated Lynch's emphatic, James Stewart voice—" 'Mark, there's a *giant* in Cooper's room.' ") Ms. Lynch, who is twenty-two, went to shopping malls to observe young girls as part of her research for "The Secret Diary," which took six weeks to plan and four days to write. (Her next project is directing a feature film, "Boxing Helena," based on her own script about a woman with no arms or legs. It will star Madonna.) Future tie-ins to the show include two more books: an autobiography of Agent Cooper ("It'll be in book form," Mr. Frost said, "but it will be every tape recording he's made since he was seventeen years old"), and a Twin Peaks Access Guide, now being designed by Richard Saul Wurman, who has produced the series of Access guides to actual cities. ("The place is real to us," Mr. Frost said.) The biggest news—cheered by the crowd—was that "Twin Peaks" had just been officially renewed for the second half of the season.

Dana Ashbrook, a tall, gangly, dark-haired young man, offered some sincere reflections on the show: "It has sort of a stigma attached to it that it's good quality." He kept shifting restlessly, leaning forward to rub his calves, and then nervously pushing his hair back from his forehead, just like Bobby Briggs. Wendy Robie, whose character currently enjoys superhuman strength, has herself run twice in the Western States 100 race across the Sierras. She filled us in on some details of the show's set decoration which are hard to discern on the TV screen. Apparently, all the figurines in Nadine's knickknack collection are broken or macabre; for instance, there's a ballerina with a bloody stump of a leg, and a bear reaching into a trash can that contains an arm. Of all the participants, only David Patrick Kelly, who seemed just a little less tightly wound than the skewed character he plays, was intent on making the afternoon worthy of the term "seminar." He provided an extended analysis of "Twin Peaks" based on Robert Graves' theory of poetry and the White Goddess. "Ben and Jerry are competing for the goddess figure, which is Laura Palmer," he explained.

Catherine Coulson apologized for not bringing the Log Lady's log. Apparently, there's only one, and it doesn't travel. Ms. Coulson said that she has known David Lynch since the early seventies, and that she had a small part, as a nurse, in his first feature, "Eraserhead." (She also did the lead character's famous piled-up hair.) Almost twenty years ago, she said, during the filming of "Eraserhead," David Lynch had foreseen that he would cast her as a log person. "One day, I put on my glasses, and David said, 'Someday you're going to play this girl with a log. I'm going to do a TV show, and it's going to be called "I'll Test My Log with Every Branch of Knowledge." You're going to wear little plaid skirts and your glasses, and you're going to take your log to various experts and get their opinion. The log is going to be ponderosa pine.' David really knew his wood."

Ms. Torchin asked about the significance of the log, and Ms. Coulson explained that the log connects the Log Lady to her dead husband and to other worlds. She was unwilling to go beyond that. "Some people say it must be like a baby," she said. "But no, it's really a *log*. You don't want to anthropomorphize the log." When Ms. Torchin asked about the possible ecological ramifications of her role, Ms. Coulson replied, "I really believe that trees have a tremendous amount to teach us. I talked to David Lynch's dad about trees, since he's been in the Forest Service for years as a research scientist. I asked him if he thought that trees have feelings. And he said, 'Well, I'm not sure, but they do have hormones.' "

REVISING THE ATLAS

It was just something I knew and thought I'd tell you.
Its relevance might be questionable, but that is no reason
not to draw attention to it, as one might to a carnation
crushed into the tarmac by a truck. I think I got the facts right
about "the egg crown," the invasions, and the arrow that killed
the rebellious second cousin of the incestuous emperor
(who fired it, in what poison its barb was steeped),
but what are you to make of this information? I could say:
That year the suburban palaces had to be rebuilt, for the sixth time
in a decade, and that might produce the required sense of awe
and strangeness, also of revulsion at acts of inhumanity and wanton
destructiveness which, however, show no sign of stopping—
mosaic faces torn from the walls and the domes,
the little towns with no names burning all over the rumpled map.

Or I could continue: *At that time Western Europe*
possessed no cities worthy of the name. And you might reflect
that now we have too many of them, and they threaten to link up
like one horrible amorphous organism on a scale
so preposterous that everything begins to seem small, squalid, undistinguished—
Arches of Triumph, festal towers, canals, and churches all lost
in the general urban scrimmage. Or you might say: "But that
is ancient history, the deadest of letters. Life today is so exciting
since we are daily menaced by the prospect of extinction
in a variety of novel forms, of which ecological ones are currently the most popular."
So you return to your novel, written in sentences calculated
not to distress the syntax-impaired, about the adventures
of a ruthlessly ambitious yet somehow wonderful young woman,
beginning in the boondocks and ending at the headquarters
of the world's classiest perfume conglomerate, and taking in
poverty, riches, sex, irony, struggle, and play, not to mention
an exhaustive kaleidoscope of despoiled but still lovely
North American landscapes along the way. And so to bed!

Yes, despite everything, isn't it good to be here
especially if, in summer, you can afford to spend your time
by some gleaming arm of the ocean with a steady supply
of cocktails at hand? Also music and X-rated videos.
Come the fall, the party circuit gets competitive, and even
the indigent can benefit, providing they have a couple of pairs
of decent shirts and pants. But I am still determined
to bend your ears, to turn your gaze back through leaf-fall
and cool breezes that bring news of the Azores or the Aleutians,
so that, reluctantly but with decision, I resort to
parallelism and human interest, the unhistorical factors:
Men shaved their beards and began to affect turbans.
Baggy pants became fashionable. Upper-class women appeared
more frequently in public, and took to giving literary soirées
in their uptown mansions. There was a craze for Islamic art,
and the erotic novel was revived for the first time in nearly a millennium.

But you turn up the TV reports of the latest
race- or drug-related murders, switching channels in the hope
that an accumulation of dull trivia will approximate to insight
(as if, with enough pebbles, you could build a Matterhorn),
or you are out the door on your way to a movie set in a colossal, painted city
that looks strangely like home, except that the colors are brighter, cleaner,
and the mechanism of the drawbridge is more immaculately Constructivist.
And you needn't worry—the hero's beautiful coat resists gunfire,
the sunset is glamorous as a billionaire's descent into bankruptcy,
a lavishly illumined liner, of archaic design, passes on the dark river,
and on its deck a swing band is playing close to the swimming pool
on which many happy couples are dancing. Ah! this is history
as we like to know it, administered by nostalgia's prefecture,
by means of which we escape the sensation that an earthquake has swept
all the sites of childhood away and there is no harbor we can call our own!

Melancholy and fatigue
must follow any examination of the facts,
insofar as there are any that elude
the pervading glimmer of ambiguity,
our hope and curse. Today, for example, the radio warns
that the elderly and those with respiratory problems should stay
indoors, and no strenuous activity should be undertaken
lest there be faintings, seizures, infarctions, collapses—
a veritable Dance of Death on sidewalks, in gasping parks.
This announcement comes between Stravinsky's "Capriccio"
and a Schubert piano trio, and the brain divides
like a tenement full of contentious apartment dwellers. On cue,
I can't breathe. My head aches, my heart also, but I continue
to mutter as if quiet children were present who would hear me:
There were great disparities. Despite centuries of complaints,
the colonnaded thoroughfare of the city was interrupted by
a quagmire into which pack animals often sank without trace.
The economic future of the state had been mortgaged to foreigners
who behaved with great arrogance, and were periodically massacred.
The plague arrived in a beautiful cloth from the East. Death
of one kind or another stared everyone in the face, but few
had the courage to return the gaze or take action. The angel
did not descend by the burnt pillar. And does not, still does not.

—John Ash

I'M RUBBER, YOU'RE GLUE

IN 1977, after a year of psychoanalysis at the rough hands of Dr. Ernesto Morales—the short, bald, muscular black-bearded Catholic Hispanic tyrant-genius of East Ninety-third Street—I could have written a case study about *him*. About how his habitual throat-clearing became downright bronchitic when he was bored, about how he chronically expressed pity for the rich and famous, about how his voice grew cloyingly sweet when he asked me about sex, about how as he was charging at my character with lance levelled I could unhorse him by raising the conversational shield of investments. If I'd mentioned these observations to him, he would have replied, "Ahem! Respectively, your interest in my cough betrays on your part a repressed preoccupation with bodily functions, your envy of celebrities demonstrates a lack of self-respect, the lubricity you hear in my voice tells us more about your inhibitions than about my voyeurism, and you think I am obsessed with money because you earn so little."

At this same one-year mark, I told him that I'd passed up a chance to sleep with a woman because she smelled funny. This sexual near-miss was the closest I'd come to any sort of intimacy with anyone in a long, long time. He said, "Now, Mr. Singer, as you should perhaps know by now, this was your own odor that you detected. I do not refer to the odor of your body but to the way in which you transformed your disgust with your sexual appetites into a physical stench and then attributed this stench to this woman." Dr. Morales's Cuban accent, thick to begin with, stiffened further as he whipped it with the extra enthusiasm of an interpretation he found especially impressive. It wouldn't have surprised me to see the "r"s in "refer" roll past the couch I was lying on.

"I didn't say 'stench,' " I said. "I didn't say she smelled bad, just a bit odd."

" 'A bit odd,' 'a bit odd,' " said Dr. Morales. "Why have you not told me this before that you are actually British and not American?"

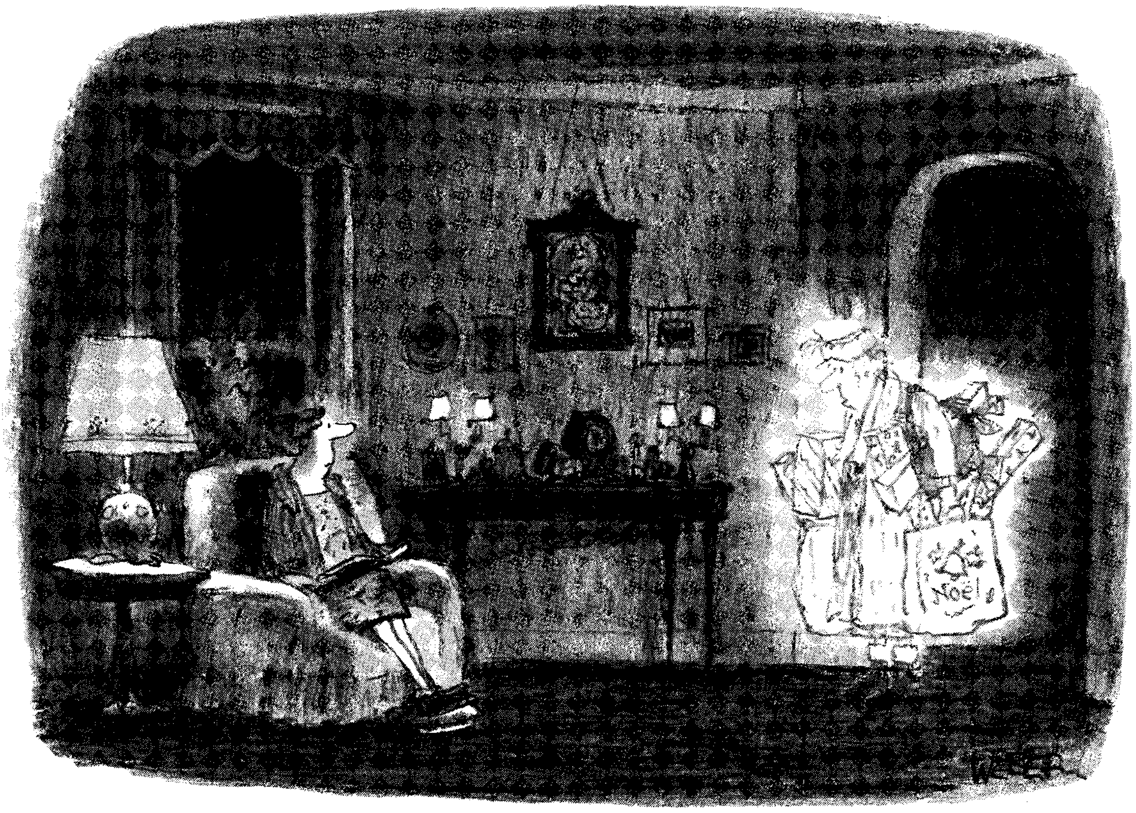
That skirmish later developed into a separate war, over Dr. Morales's assertion that I held his English in contempt. I did not. His English was far superior to that of most of my colleagues in the English Department of the Coventry Preparatory School for Boys—to say nothing of that of my students. Superior in clarity, grammar, and economy—to say nothing of forcefulness of expression. Much later in what he called "our work," I was able to say calmly to Dr. Morales that it was his own insecurity that led him to make such an accusation against me, but at this point I was just beginning to learn his tricks, and it was only with agitation that I started to suggest that I wasn't the only one in that office at the rear of the top floor of a brownstone just off Fifth Avenue who was capable, on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday morning from seven-thirty to eight-twenty, of tarring himself with his own brush.

SAMIRA laughed. I was walking around in my bathrobe, doing an imitation of Dr. Morales touting triple-tax-free municipals—"Eet ees as eef the government were eesuing to you licenses wheech permeet you to rob eet"—and she was lying in bed, now wearing, unbuttoned, the white shirt that, along with slacks and a sports coat, I'd hung over the back of a chair for my appointment with Morales on Monday morning. "Speaking of money, how can you afford to see an analyst three times a week?" Samira asked in her slow, dreamy, quiet voice. "I mean, on a schoolteacher's salary and all."

"I can't afford it. Except I can, in a way. This place is rent-controlled, for one thing, and also I've been living like a monk. Well, until tonight, ha-ha. I do a lot of tutoring in the summers, and I have this small trust fund that I could use that my mother left me when she died. And even though my father and I don't get along, I guess I could always go to him."

"You know, you don't have to be so nervous," Samira said. "Why do you go on seeing this shrink if he's so weird?"

"I don't know. It's as if I have to



"I'm the spirit of Christmas Present."

keep going back to make sure he's real."

"Is he helping you?"

"It's hard to tell."

"I feel like I'm talking to the Invisible Man or something," Samira said. "Come back over here where I can at least see you."

She raised herself up on her elbows, and the shirt fell open. Blue-white light from the street lamp outside my window on West End Avenue fell across her.

"Oh, Jake, please don't look at me," she said, laughing again.

"But you're beautiful," I said.

"But one of my breasts is a little larger than the other."

"Terrible!"

"And they're both too big. You know—the pill and all."

"One outrage after another," I said.

"I really think you can relax now." She got up, took the shirt off, and let it drop to the floor. "By the way, do you have any cake or cookies or anything around here?"

"I'm afraid not," I said.

"Nothing to be afraid of," she said. She sat down on the edge of the bed. "I'll manage."

I went and stood in front of her. She reached up and pushed the robe off my shoulders. "Tell him about this," she said.

"AND why are you smiling so broadly this morning, Mr. Singer?" Dr. Morales asked the next day as I stretched out on the gray leatherette couch with the gray leatherette jellyroll headrest. He had ushered me in with his own customary grin and his ironical-looking demi-bow and had then sat down in the gray leatherette chair, where he started fiddling with his answering machine. There we were, washed up again on those two tiny barren sister atolls, about to cast our lines into the Great Sea of the Unconscious.

"Well, I met someone over the weekend," I said. "She's very nice."

"Good," Dr. Morales said. Silence. "Did you fuck her?" The question had the honeyed tone characteristic of his sexual interrogations.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Please take your penis out from under the English bowling hat, Mr. Singer," Dr. Morales said tiredly. He was still fussing with the machine, which suddenly emitted five seconds' worth of backward Chipmunkese. "Did you fuck her?"

"Bowler," I said, "and as a matter of fact I did."

"And did you as a matter of fact enjoy it?"

"Greatly."

"Greatly."

"Is there an echo in here? What's wrong with 'greatly,' for Christ's sake? I enjoyed it a lot."

"Better. How many times did you fuck her?"

"Two or three. I don't know. Don't you even want to know her name? Don't you—"

"All in good time, Mr. Singer. You and I are not on a date at the opera. Here we do not have to comment on how very like a camel is the cloud overhead or raise our pinkie when we drink our tea. Did she have a climax?"

"I don't know. She said she did. Jesus, this is like a high-school locker room."

"Precisely. It is lamentable but true that that is the last time for many people to discuss these important matters. Now, what kinds of noises did she make?"

"*What?*"

"Perhaps you do not know because you have these episodes of deafness."

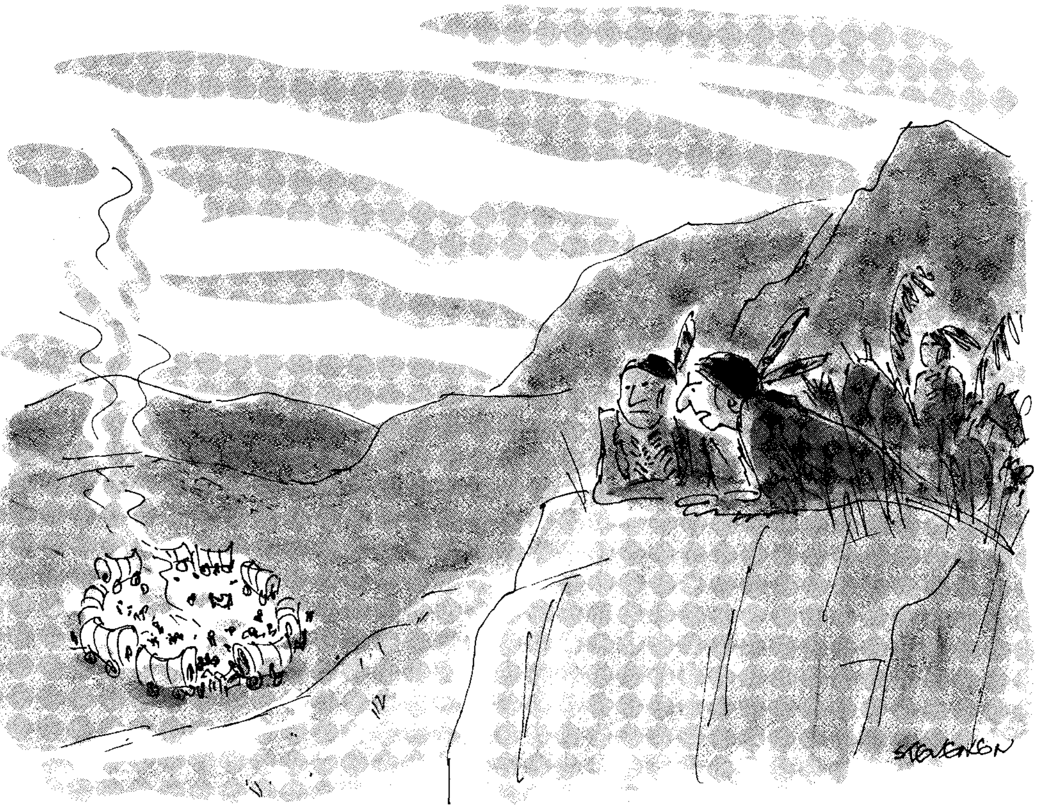
"Now, listen. You can't—"

"No, *you* listen. Mr. Singer. It is *you* who cannot. You cannot bring yourself to acknowledge that you think in such terms and to speak frankly to me about this sexual experience. You are ashamed, and so you force me to interrogate you, so that you can express the shock that you feel toward yourself. Not only do you claim that you do not have to sit down to move your bowels like the rest of us poor mortals, you claim not to move them at all, and then you react with disgust after compelling me to move them for you."

"A neat trick, you must admit."

"And now we have swimming into the session the red herring of your alleged humor."

We sparred a little longer, and then Dr.

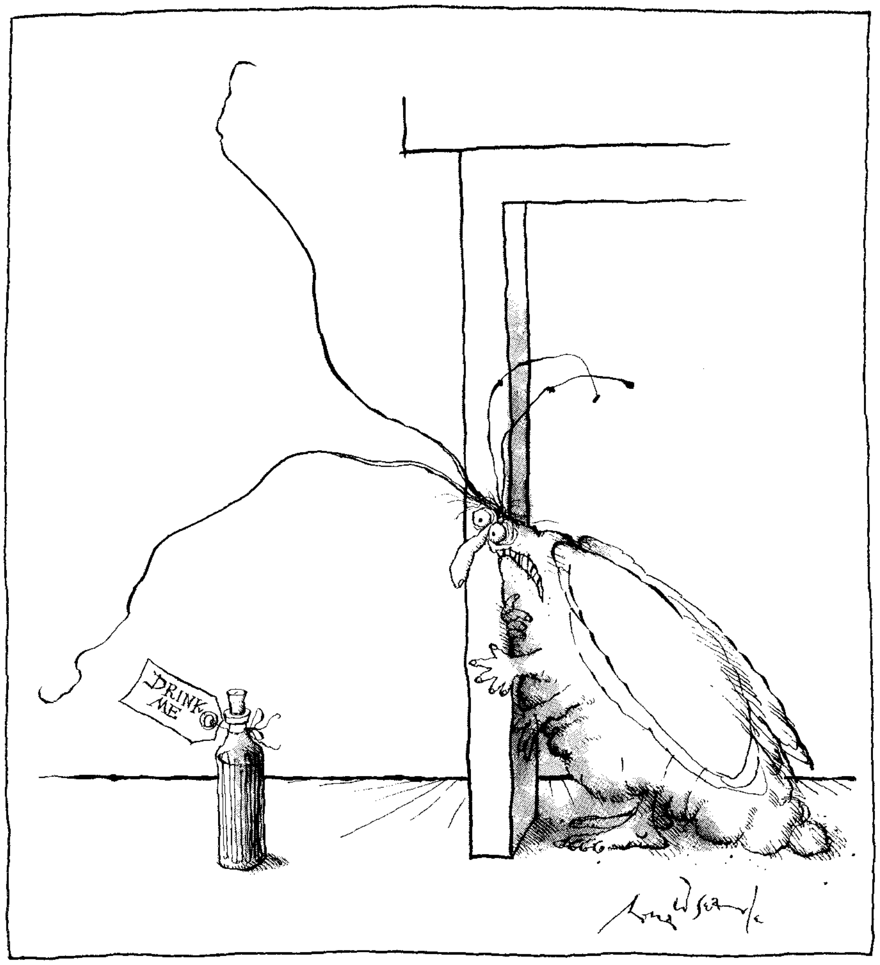


"They appear to be opting for the circled-wagons defense."

Morales resumed his extraction of graphic details. After the most unusual of these specifics, which he received in reverential silence, I added, "And she told me to make sure to tell you about it."

Dr. Morales awoke from his trance with conviction renewed. "You see, you see," he said. "She knows what is important. She and I are on the same frequency." He added, forlornly, "So you have discussed our work with this woman. Later, we shall have to analyze why you have broken our agreement." He was always doing this—adding another waltz to our therapeutic dance card, as if he wanted the music never to end. "Now, would you tell me what positions you used?"

I left the session feeling like a potboiler thumbed through by some creep in search of the good parts.



CROSSED PATHS

Lewis Carroll Meets Kafka

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SAMIRA had sat down at a table with me in the cafeteria of the Metropolitan Museum. It was a mild, dreary November Sunday, with wind-driven rain streaming out of the sky over Central Park. The weather had herded thousands into the museum. The hubbub depressed me even more than waiting out the afternoon with the N.F.L. in my apartment would have, and it was a measure of my mood that I didn't notice the small, beautiful olive-skinned girl with a sketch pad sitting nearby until she asked me to pass her the sugar.

"Oh, please, don't watch," she said. "I have an awful sweet tooth. I could probably grow crystals in this stuff." Her speech was soft and languid, as if the words themselves were coalescing one at a time.

"Yeah, well," I said. I looked up. "As a matter of fact I have a sweet tooth, myself." *The clam opens his shell, eh, Mr. Singer?*

"Small world," she said dreamily, and she gave me a solar smile.

A regular museum pickup, as I recalled such things—except that she started it off, and her conversation's veil of pretense was ultra-thin. What did you come to see, she asked me. I don't know—nothing in particular. The Vermeers look good on a day like this—all that sunlight pouring in the windows. But it's so calm and buttoned up, don't you think, she said. The baroque stuff here isn't that great, but still at least there's passion and movement. But it's pretty theatrical, I said. *Now you are throwing her out of the bed even before she is in it and feels your chilly feet.*

And so it went. Her name was Samira Khoury. She had been born in Lebanon and was brought here when she was six. Her family was Christian in background, but they lived in a Muslim neighborhood in Beirut, and she couldn't say which was worse—the cold, eyes-averted hatred of their adult neighbors or the stones and curses of the children. I wondered later if living through such hostility as a child hadn't helped her become the bemused, often nearly detached person she seemed to me in the brief glimpse I had of her. I also imagined that so much early disorder might have steered her toward art. And it was private disorder as well as public. Samira's father, a wealthy doctor in Beirut, anticipated the chaos that was lying in wait for his country and uprooted himself and his family and fled to the United States. But he hadn't anticipated and couldn't handle the despair that lies in wait for all émigrés. He got a job as a lab technician here and stayed in it, and he and Samira's mother lived their lives—demolished lives, I gathered from Samira's tone—in Wayne, New Jersey, in a tract house.

This city. Cuban psychoanalysts, pompous Scottish headmasters, Hungarian superintendents too busy polishing the brass to fix the boiler, fierce-looking mustachioed Afghans running grimy delis on Tenth Avenue, Senegalese street-corner umbrella sellers, British TV-commercial directors, island girls in the parks playing sweetly with the children and despising the parents, Sikh cab drivers short on English, old Yiddishers inching along the streets carrying plastic bags with cut-rate bruised fruit in them. Sexually intrepid Lebanese-born artists.

Samira must have been talented—

four years on scholarship at Carnegie Mellon—but when I asked if I could see her drawings (*Ah, we are back in business, Mr. Singer*) she said, "Oh, please don't even ask. I'd be too embarrassed." Very demure she was in her manner, and very alluring in her black skirt and sweater and red tights. She was doing free-lance catalogue work for Honeybee, and she lived in Chelsea with another hopeful artist—from Turkey, of all places—and her roommate's boyfriend, a musician from Rio. She was going to take a course at the Art Students League at night, starting in January, if her father could lend her the money.

When she said no about the sketch pad, I said, "Well, then, would you have dinner with me instead?" *Olé, Mr. Singer!*

I never got the chance to tell the real Dr. Morales any of this. He missed his chance to cough through a description of walking back through the Park with Samira, of how lively she seemed in the sharp rain and among the fallen leaves and dutiful dog walkers. He lost the opportunity to needle me about my relentlessly self-deprecating dinner conversation when we met at a restaurant on Broadway in the evening, and about how I tried not to hear her when she said she didn't really want to go back to her place afterward. Didn't I mention that my apartment was right around the corner on West End?

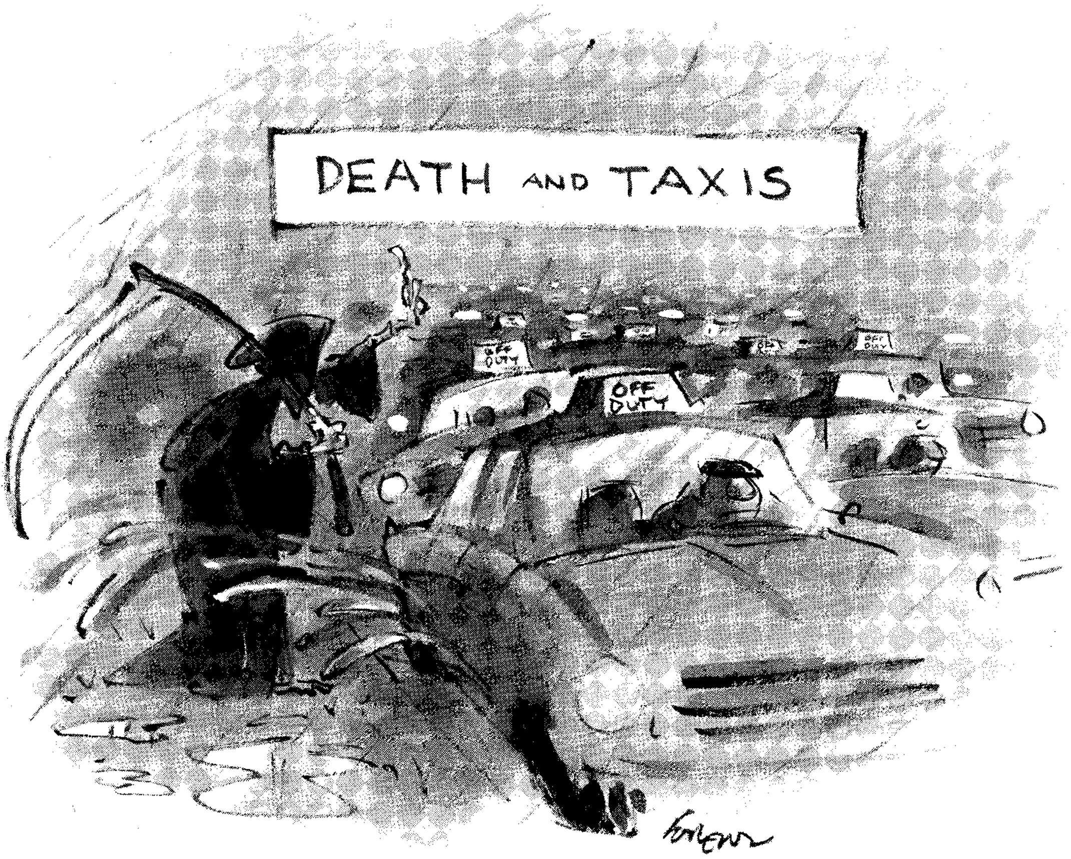
No building of narrative tension for you, Dr. Morales, from Samira's telling me that she found me very attractive. No trembling like a pointer when she adds that I can easily find out *how* attractive, as she is wearing nothing under her cute short tan suède skirt. She said all this as pleasantly and informatively as an exotic stewardess offering in-flight services on an excellent Pacific Rim airline.

No, he missed all that, and I never got a chance to fill him in on it. The affair was a short one, and Dr. Morales and I spent the remainder of it shouting at each other like grade-schoolers in a playground. I'm rubber, you're glue. Whatever you say bounces off me and sticks to you.

ON the Tuesday after I first met Samira at the museum, I took her to a Coventry football game up at Baker Field, at the northern tip of Manhattan. It's Columbia's football field, and they let Coventry use it for weekday games. The rain that had been falling since Sunday let up as we arrived, and a wind not yet cold but promising winter started blowing out of the northwest. Pewter clouds raced along below the leaden sky. I could hear the water coursing through Spuyten Duyvil, and the Henry Hudson Bridge vibrated with heavy traffic to and from the Bronx. Like so many ordinary activities in New York, the football game seemed to me dwarfed, improbable, and precarious, as if the skies might open and a Jehovian hand reach down and pluck us all up, a huge wave might crash in from the river, the bridge fall down.

"Would you look at their *be*hinds!" Samira muttered. We were standing on the sidelines and watching the boys flop around happily in the mud. "They're so beautiful," she sighed. She took my arm and adhered to my side. The question of how fully dressed she might be drove anomie from my mind. "I don't think I could ever be a teacher with kids like that. Or maybe when I was sixty-five." The Coventry student spectators, for their part, kept sidling up to us on one pretext or another, for a closer examination of this chick, and a teacher of theirs in the unfamiliar role of human being. I ended up enjoying myself.

On the way back downtown, we stopped at a Middle Eastern grocery. Then Samira went back with me to my apartment and cooked couscous and lamb stew for us. In the kitchen she was careful and neat. I helped her a little, and we kept on bumping or backing into each other. "Sorry." "Excuse me." The meal was excellent, but we got up from the table in the middle of it, and by the time we might have gone back, the food would have been long since cold.



"DO you want to talk while we're waiting?" Samira asked. She was sitting up and gazing out the window as the dark gathered and the street lamp on West End waxed full. I lay beside her.

"You're a good cook," I said. "Who

does the cooking in your family?”

“My father now. My mother used to, in Beirut, but here he has so much time on his hands.”

“He isn't trying to get accredited as a doctor?”

“I think he has given up. It's so sad. I hate to go home at all anymore. Maybe you and I are birds of a feather. It must be hard for you, with no mother and being on such bad terms with your father.”

“It is,” I said. “Morales must have done it—passed some test or something to be a doctor here—but then he's a maniac.”

“Morales, Morales.”

“You're right. I won't get started.”

“You know, I had to call my father yesterday, because the first payment for that course I wanted to take is due soon. He doesn't have the money and he was ashamed to tell me.”

“That's very sad. Is this teacher really that good?”

“He is very good, and he also happens to be very attractive. I'm going to seduce him, if I ever take his class.”

“Sex, sex.”

“Everyone has their own way of changing the subject, I guess. Sometimes I think that painting and sex are all I let myself care about.”

“And sweets,” I said. “Which reminds me.” From under the bed I brought out a package of chocolate cookies.

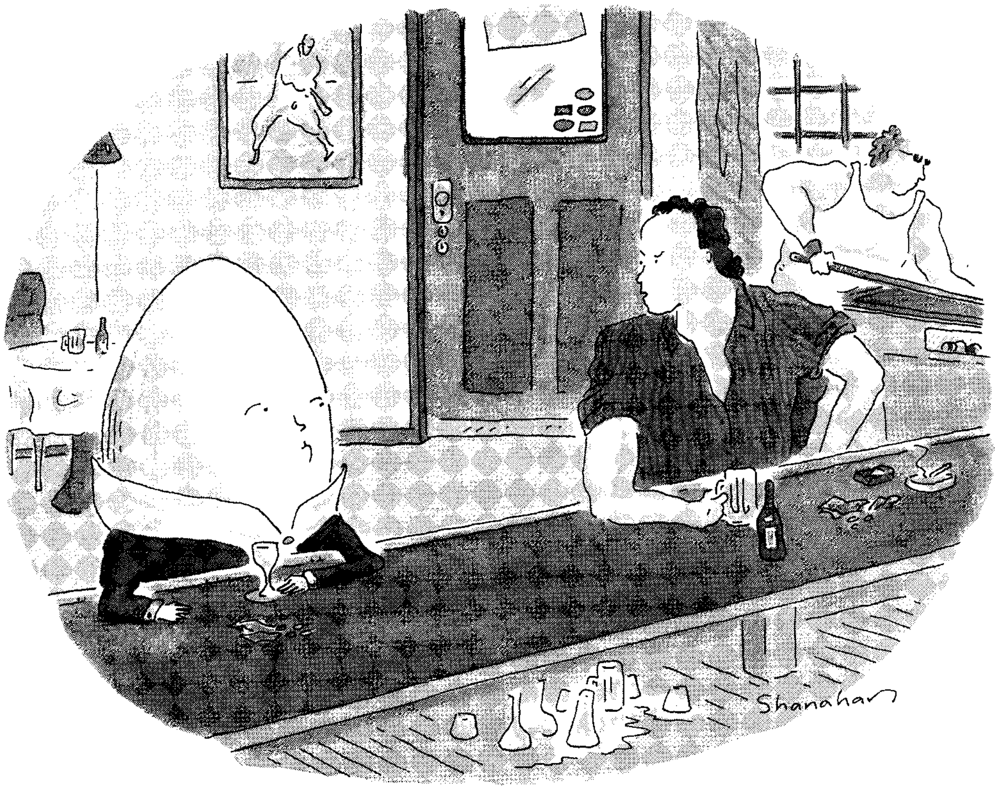
“Oo, look,” Samira said. “How nice of you.”

“You know, I could lend you that money,” I said.

“Oh, no. I couldn't accept that. You hardly even know me.”

“I know you well enough so that I can't see you skipping town exactly,” I said. “It's only a loan. I have to go into my trust soon anyway, for Morales. All it will take is a little juggling, and Morales will just have to wait a couple of extra days for his fee. I think he'll understand.”

“OF course I understand,” Dr. Morales said the next morning when, about fifteen minutes into the session, I told him I had lent Samira some money and wouldn't have his payment until Friday. “I understand that you had to pay your whore.”



“I eat guys like you for breakfast.”

• •

“Hey, hold on a second. I can't believe—”

“I am on the moon, Mr. Singer. I am on the moon—”

“I'll say,” I muttered.

“What?”

“Nothing.”

“I am on the moon looking at the earth through my shiny new telescope. I e-zoom in on New York City and then on the West Side. What do I see? What do I see? I see a man having sex with a woman. And then in the morning through my telescope I see the man giving the woman a check as she is leaving. Now, you must tell me what interpretation I am to put on these events?”

“But this is nutty. You're not on the moon. You're here, in this office with me, and I'm telling you it wasn't like that at all. There was no arrangement about money or anything like that.”

“Did she know you had any money, Mr. Singer?”

“No. Yes, actually. She asked how I could be a schoolteacher and pay for psychoanalysis at the same time, but—”

“So she established that you had at least some money. There are all kinds of whores, Mr. Singer, including those who do not know that they are whores.”

“Whores don't give back the money they're paid.”

“You are so certain that this woman will repay this money?”

“Of course she will.”

“I wish I could share your confidence. Perhaps you would like to discuss why you are so offended by the suggestion that you might have paid for sex. It has happened once or twice in the world before, you know, without this sort of anger and shame.”

“No, damn it—*you* are the one who is angry,” I said. I didn't know where the idea had come from, and I wasn't even sure what I meant.

“And so now you put on the harmor of rage in order to resist the—”

“*You* are the one who is enraged, and *you* are the one who feels like a whore. I pay you, your patients pay you, for this kind of relationship. Now I come and tell you for the first time in more than a year that I'll be two days late with your goddam fee because I lent money to someone else, and you get so angry that you construe my relationship with this person—the first nice thing that has happened to me in quite a while, I might add—the same way you secretly construe your patients' relationships with you. Angry and *jealous*, I might add—you are jealous. The money is only the paper on the surface. You know I'm responsible about your fee. You've been *slighted*. Your customer has put someone else before you."

There was a long silence, after which Dr. Morales, sounding incredibly distant—sepulchral, as if he'd passed over and were trying to communicate with the living—said, "In my judgment, Mr. Singer, you are projecting your view of me as a prostitute onto me, because you wish to disown it. No, I am sorry. I am lower than a prostitute. For you have paid the prostitute. That is my judgment, which, of course, you have already made sure to dismiss if not ridicule, this morning and frequently in our work together. But let us assume, for the sake of argument, which is after all what you so often desire to substitute for analysis—let us assume that you are correct, and that it is I who is angry and jealous, that it is I who is trying to disavow his feelings of defilement. Let us assume that you are right. Then my question is: Of what benefit is your triumph to you? What sort of ground have you gained with this counter-offensive, as you no doubt view it?"

Silence again.

"I shall tell you what you gain by such measures," Dr. Morales went on. "You become impervious to change. If you confront me, you do not have to suffer the pain of confronting yourself. This is *your* analysis, not mine, but your knowledge of your conflicts and your mastery of them will grow by neither an inch nor an ounce if you pursue these tactics. If you busy your mind with a war against me, you will never make peace with yourself."

"Well, then, if I'm incapable of doing analysis, of making any headway here, then maybe—"

"I did not say that, Mr. Singer. Perhaps saddest of all, and most insulting and demeaning to me, is that you refuse to admit the value of what you have managed despite yourself to accomplish here. Your failure to pay my fee on time is one aspect of denial."

"And your rigidity about the money shows a pretty shaky sense of self-respect," I said. "Am I catching on? Listen. I'll cash in one of the C.D.s after school today and pay you on Friday. I'm sorry I missed the payment, but I don't really see that it's—"

"And the last thing you will admit is that this new sexual liaison of yours, whatever its nature, would have been out of the question for you when we started our work."

"You're taking the credit?"

"How did it come about?"

"You were too preoccupied with the endocrinology of it to find out."

"Please try not to be a smart-alex, Mr. Singer. How did it come about?"

"Aleck. I met her in the museum on Sunday and asked her out to dinner."

"Would you have asked her out to dinner under the same circumstances a year ago? You do not see that— Why must you cash in a C.D.? You will lose some of the interest." Dr. Morales's voice had suddenly lost its otherworldliness.

"The trust fund is in C.D.s. Five of them, ten thousand dollars each."

"And what other instruments do you have?"

"Instruments? Investments? None. I've told you before. It's all in C.D.s."

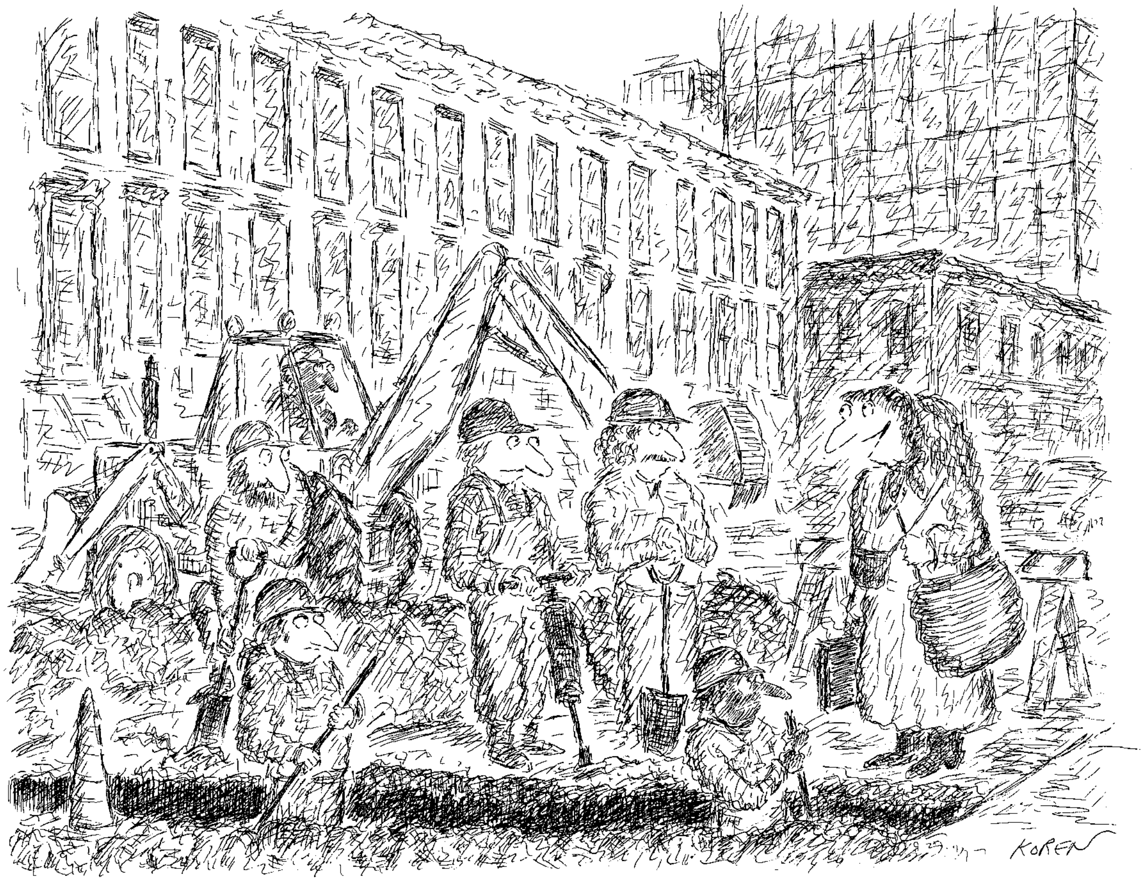
"Surely you are joking! For how many years has it been this way?"

"Ten—since I turned twenty-one. I just roll them over."

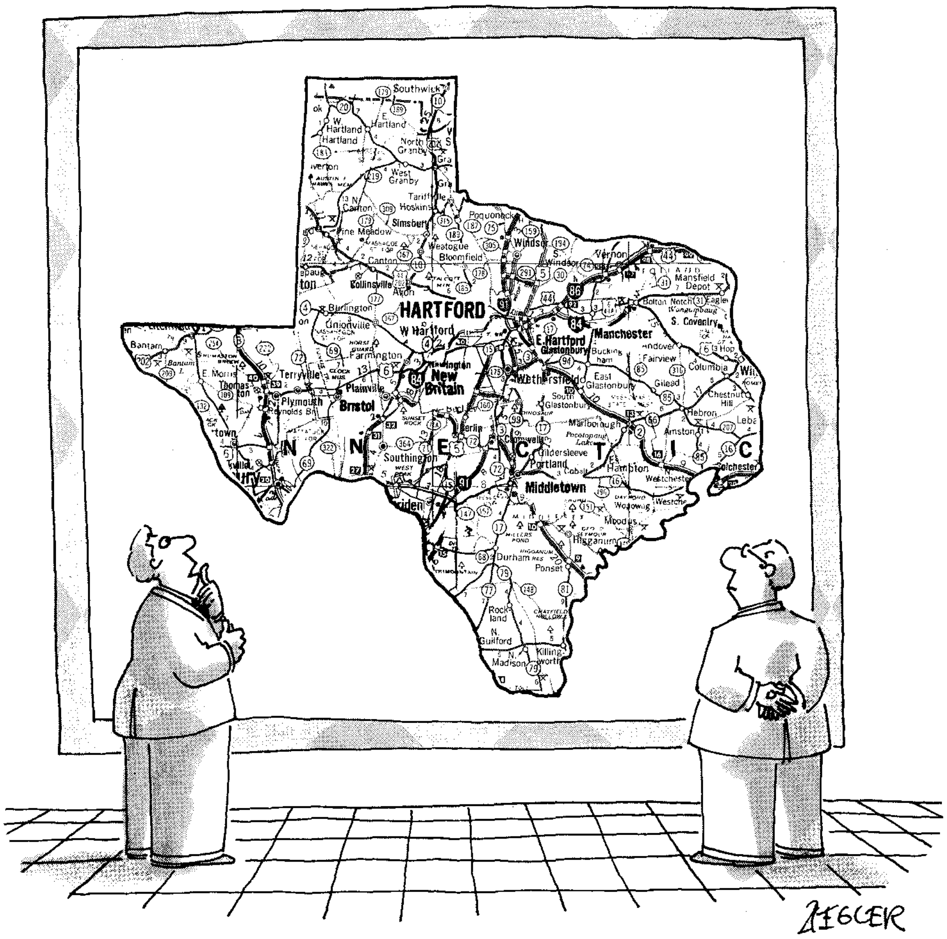
"Now, really, Mr. Singer, you must diversify. Do you have any idea how much money you have already lost? Perhaps we may talk about this in the next session. Our time is up for today."

And a good thing too. I might have got up and hit him if it had gone on a second longer. Next session next life, I said to myself as I walked out.

I ASKED Samira if she had ever been with women. Yes, she said with a drowsy



"*What's it like, working with your hands?*"



"Well, it sure looks like Texas, and yet . . ."

• •

laugh. Why did I want to know? A man and a woman, I asked. Yes, but they hadn't done much more than fool around. Older men? Yes, she said—you. She turned over to face me. I guess she thought I was taking a straightforward midnight sexual history, as new lovers often do. But in fact the sordidness of the session with Morales in the morning had been working within me like slow-acting venom.

"Have you ever been with two men?" I asked.

"One time."

"Did you ever have sex in front of other people?"

"Yes, once, when I was seventeen. But, really, we were just kids."

I went on for a few more minutes. The intimacy in Samira's voice gave way to puzzlement and then anxiety. I began to feel as Morales must when he roasted his patients on the spit of his own prurience. Finally Samira had enough. "I don't do those things anymore," she said. "And I don't want to talk about them anymore. This is mean."

In my mind, I said, *No, of course you do not wish to continue our discussion of the way you have chosen this unbridled sexual behavior to punish your father for his failure.* The idea made me feel brilliant, and horribly lonely.

After a tense silence, Samira asked me, as if in contrition, whether we could spend the weekend together. She seemed now not even faintly a gift from sex heaven or a member of some serene rescue squad or exactly what I'd been waiting for but thoroughly and alarmingly human. I said I was going to have a lot of papers to grade, and I would call her. I didn't get to sleep until just before dawn. I'd be surprised if Samira got any sleep at all.

When the alarm went off, I heard Samira moving around in the kitchen. I went to the closet and put on my bathrobe, and when I turned around she was standing there, dressed, holding her bright-red parka. "That was too weird last night," she said. "What happened?"

"I'm not awake yet," I said. "I don't know what to say."

"That's exactly right," Samira said, with tears now in her eyes. "And when you figure it out it will probably be too late. You could be so nice, you know?" She turned and left, and the small sounds of the apartment—the ticking of a clock, the frigid wind sighing at the windows, the hiss of the radiators, a siren from the street—came back as if they'd been switched on.

I stumbled into the kitchen. On the counter next to the stove, on top of a paper napkin with doodles on it, I found the check I'd given her, ripped into small pieces. I threw the check away and noticed that the doodles on the napkin were not doodles but a drawing. A drawing of me—almost but not quite a caricature. It showed a rail-thin young man with coarse straight black hair like a shoebrush, a big straight nose, big circles under his eyes, standing in front of a blackboard and gesturing expansively, almost frantically, with both hands. In the foreground was a row of ovals—the backs of kids' heads in a classroom, like eggs in a carton except for a cowlick here and there and one oval leaning over at a seventy-degree angle: asleep. It was a wonderful piece of work for something so offhand. Every line showed energy and discipline and wit. It was affectionate, in contrast to the figure it depicted, who looked as if he couldn't care about much more than the sound of his own words.

With dismay, I found myself rehearsing what I might say to Morales about the rejected check: See? So much for your commercial theory. Or did it prove him right? And the drawing. I held it in my hands and imagined myself showing it to him. See? See? And so, I realized, I would be going back to him after all. Evidently, it was still him or nobody.

—DANIEL MENAKER

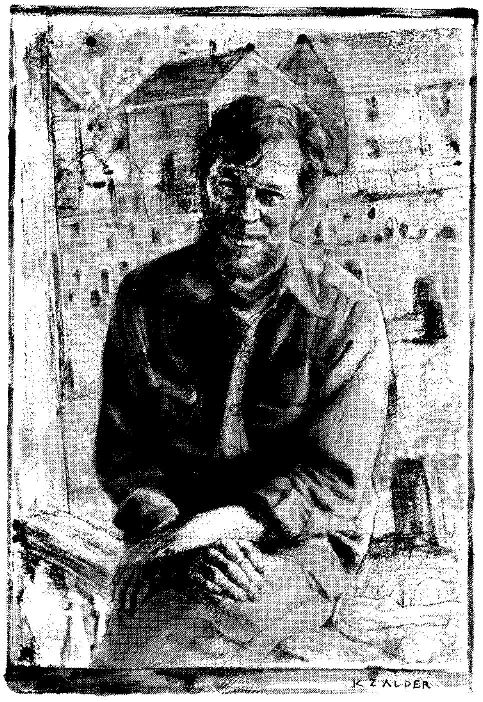
•

F/T N/S sitter Mon-Fri, my Pt. Moody home. Must be like large dogs.—*Adv. in the Vancouver* (*B. C.*) *Sun.*

Loyal, hairy, and housebroken.

PROFILES

A SINGLE PERSON MAKING A SINGLE THING



WHEN Richard Benson got a telephone call from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation informing him that he was being given a five-year, two-hundred-and-twelve-thousand-dollar grant, he thought it was a joke. Benson knew that his name was under consideration, because a few months earlier a man he didn't know had called to say that the MacArthur Foundation had asked him to evaluate Benson's work as a photographer and a printer of photographic books, and would Benson please tell him what was so special about what he did. The chances of his actually receiving one of the MacArthur "genius" grants had seemed so slight, though, that he kept shouting at the caller from the foundation to "come off it." Barbara Benson, his wife, remembers his response when he finally realized that the call was legitimate. She heard him say, on the phone, "O.K., I'm going to revolutionize photography."

That was in 1986. Benson is now in the last year of his MacArthur fellowship, and he can say that he has indeed revolutionized photography—at least, in terms of his own work. He has invented a method of printing photographic negatives in acrylic paint on light-sensitized sheets of aluminum. The black-and-white prints that he makes in this manner have a tonal richness and subtlety that you do not find in conventionally made photographs. The best of his color prints (his method here is still evolving) look more like paintings than like photographs. Each print requires hours and hours of work. He builds up the image from the negative in stages, exposing the aluminum plate as many as twenty or thirty times, until he gets the color values and the contrasts exactly the way he wants them. The result of this intensive labor is a unique image; to make another, he would have to repeat the entire process.

One of the great advantages of the process, according to Benson (who enjoys explaining things), is that none of it has to be done in the dark. The gelatine solution with which he coats the metal plate reacts only to short-wavelength—or blue—light, and this means that he can see what is taking place at every step of the way. "The problem with photography is that we make a thing once, in the darkroom, where we can't see, and if that isn't right we throw it away and make another," Benson said to me last summer. "What I want is to get something, look at it, and have that tell me what to add to it. I want to do the thing that Edward Hopper talked about. Hopper said that painting, to him, was about a vision, and when he made a painting he reluctantly surrendered the vision to what he made. What a *great* description! Photographs don't do that. Photography is the most incredible descriptive medium there is, but physically the thing never looks that great."

We were sitting on the deck outside the Bensons' house, on Tilden Avenue, in Newport, Rhode Island, in a neighborhood that is at some distance from the ponderous mansions of the rich. Tilden Avenue is more gentrified today than it was when the Bensons moved there, in 1975, but the people who live on their block are not well-to-do, and some of the two-story frame houses that skirt a small cemetery are not in the best repair. Richard and Barbara Benson bought their house for eleven thousand dollars. They also bought the house next to it, for eight thousand. They shored the first one up, moved the second one back about fifty feet, and joined it to the rear of the first house, where it provides space for Benson's darkroom, machine shop, and printing press. Benson supports his family mainly through his work as a printer. In the field of publications dealing with photography as an art—a field that includes expensive trade books, museum catalogues, and monographs—his work is considered to be in a class by itself. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and a number of other leading institutions turn to him whenever they can for the extremely difficult and largely unappreciated task of turning photographic negatives into halftone screens that can then be used to make prints, in ink, on the pages of books. "I can honestly say that I'm the best printer in the world," Benson informed me cheerfully. (He can make this sort of statement sound almost self-deprecating.) "It's my gift. I didn't do anything to deserve it."

Benson also teaches two days a week at Yale, in the photography department of the School of Art. In his spare time, he takes photographs. Sometimes he talks about wanting to give up his work as a printer for other people in order to concentrate on his own work as a photographer, but he didn't do that when he got the MacArthur grant, and the economic pressures of his life, as a forty-seven-year-old father of four children, three of whom are still in school or college, probably insure that he won't quit printing for a while. Last summer, when I spent some time with him, he was working on a book of photographs by Paul Strand, to be published jointly by Aperture and the National Gallery, and also on two new books by Lee Friedlander, a contemporary photographer whose work he greatly admires. Friedlander, who just got a MacArthur grant himself, has insisted on having Benson as the printer for most of his books. "He's just the best," he said, laughing, when I called him to ask what made Benson such a superior printer. "It's all in the eye and in the hands, like witchcraft or something. He's quite different from anyone else."

RICHARD BENSON is an exuberant, dishevelled-looking man, lean and quick-moving. He stands a little under six feet in his sandals, and he tends to edge in close to people when he talks to them. He can be a non-stop talker with any sort of encouragement, but he has a boyish readiness to catch himself up short and tell you that he's talking too much and will stop in a moment. Since boyhood, he has been called Chip, as in "chip off the old block," because of his physical resemblance to his late father. He wears what he calls dungarees (not jeans) held up by suspenders, the way his father did, and he drives, with enormous pleasure, a car that his father undoubtedly would have approved of—a 1930 Model A Ford sedan, which he has outfitted with engine parts that allow it to cruise (if that is the term for its noisy and exhilarating gait) at speeds up to seventy-five miles per hour. Benson truly loves machinery. He has a lot of it in his basement, including a diesel generator, a roomful of storage batteries (in case of power failures), and a lathe to make replacement parts. "I have to watch myself," he admitted to me. "I could easily spend all my time fooling with this stuff." Although he is clearly a mechanical wizard, he claims to be something of a klutz. "I'm not really a good craftsman," he told me. "Not like my brother Fud, who can make anything. He's got the best hands in the world. I'm more like our father—with me, the thinking about making is really good, but in the execution I have a hard time."

John Howard Benson, Chip's father, was unsurpassed at his trade, which happened to be carving letters in stone. His two surviving sons, living in a town that has produced some exceptional craftsmen during the three and a half centuries of its existence, inherited his faith in the value of making things. "The problem is that nobody does that anymore," John Everett (Fud) Benson said one evening, toward the end of a dinner beautifully made by Barbara Benson. "They make a part of something, or they make an instruction for somebody else to make something. Two hundred years ago, a woman had to be able to start with grain to make bread, and a man making a wagon had to start with a tree. Chip and I feel that too much of that has been lost. We think the density and complexity of a vision come from a single person making a single thing."

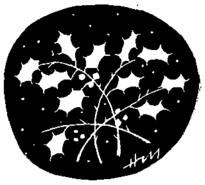
"In our time, people are infatuated with thinking," Chip put in. "But this notion that the idea is adequate all by itself is just absolutely wrong. I believe that an idea has no meaning until it finds physical form."

"People who think thinking is enough are responsible for the art fraud," Fud said. "For somebody like Jenny Holzer to come along and say the idea is enough, just put it in lights—this implies that Jascha Heifetz's finest cadenza, and the physical accomplishment that it involves, is available to everybody. And that's a lie."

"Photography is full of people who have other people do the work," Chip said, his voice rising in astonishment. "Photography is the only medium where you hardly have to do anything anyway, and here they go and get somebody else to do the darkroom work. It's comical."

"Standards do exist," Fud said. "Our brother Tom could walk into a room and say, 'This object is good, that one isn't.' He had that sort of eye."

The conversation veered to Tom, the oldest brother, who died of a heart attack three years ago, at the age of fifty. Tom Benson had never been able to get his life together. A huge man, magnetic and handsome and phenomenally strong, he had suffered from dyslexia and from the unsolved conundrum of how to make a living. Tom had been in the Navy. He had come home to Newport afterward, and put himself through college, and after that he had worked for a local group called Operation Clapboard, which took options on Colonial houses in town and found buyers who would preserve them, and then, after Doris Duke made restoration one of her particular causes, he tried the antique business, and founded a Museum of Yachting.



"When Tom came into a room, everybody stopped talking," Chip said. "He was that kind of man. He should have been an artist. I've often felt that the course of our three lives could be understood by what happened to each of us when our father died. With Tom—he and the old man fought for their entire lives. Couldn't understand each other at all. Our father was teaching a famous course at the Rhode Island School of Design and trying to do wonderful work cutting tombstones, and Tom was hopping up Model A's and driving the wrong way down one-way streets and getting arrested regularly. Tom was away when our father died. He was out in Port Townsend, Washington, in the Navy, and I think he was just beginning to realize what he was like, and the guy died on him. He couldn't even get home for the funeral; the Red Cross messed up his flight. Now, Fud, the middle son, was just a terrible teen-ager, running around with every girl in Newport, doing unspeakable things. But for some reason he got the idea that he wanted to learn to cut letters, and he worked one summer in the shop. Fud was just learning what the old man could do, and the guy died on him. And, I swear, both of them spent their adult lives working this out. I was just oblivious of the whole thing. I really didn't know my father well at all. I just thought he was very odd. He was the only man around who wore a beard, and corduroy shirts that Mother made for him, and dungarees, and sneakers with holes in them. And he was sick really the whole time I knew him. He had heart disease for the last ten years of his life, and I was twelve when he died, in 1956. You see, I think it must be very hard to have a father. I look at friends who have fathers, and it seems to me that if you're a man in your twenties or thirties— I don't know what the hell you do with a father. It must be quite odd. I feel a real sort of freedom not to have had that."

THE Benson boys grew up in an eighteenth-century frame house, painted dark red, overlooking Narragansett Bay, in the Point section of Newport, one of the oldest parts of town. Their mother still lives there. Her family, the Smiths, were Philadelphia Quakers who had been coming to Newport in the summer since 1860; they once owned all four houses on the corner of Washington and Poplar Streets, where her house is now—it was known locally as Smith Corners. When Esther Fisher Smith married John Howard Benson, in 1934, and they moved into the red house, her husband was just getting established in the trade that had more or less chosen him, rather than the other way around.

John Howard Benson was a local boy, born and raised in Newport, and he had decided to become an artist after failing the physical exam for the Naval Academy at Annapolis. He spent a couple of years at the Art Students League in New York, studying with Mahonri Young and Joseph Penell. After that, he worked for a couple of architectural firms in New York, but in 1925 he came home to Newport, where, casting about for ways to use his skills, he agreed to carve a tombstone for the wife of a local clergyman. Having had no experience in this line of work, he went to the John Stevens Shop, on Thames Street, whose main business was designing and carving tombstones. The John Stevens Shop had been started in 1705, and it is probably the oldest business in continuous operation, on the same site, in this country, although nobody has ever nailed that down for certain. The original John Stevens was a Yorkshireman who came over from England in 1702, settled in Newport, and, in his mid-fifties, set himself up, without any prior experience, as a stonecarver and letterer. (He had been a mason in England.) His descendants kept the business going for more than two hundred years. When Benson went to carve his first stone there, the last Stevens had died, and the shop was nearly defunct. Benson, who had long admired and even written newspaper articles about the old tombstones in Newport's Common Burial Ground—many of which had been designed and executed in the John Stevens Shop—felt an immediate affinity for the place. He ended up renting the shop for a year, and in 1927 he borrowed twelve hundred dollars and bought the place, there being nobody else to carry out the orders that were waiting to be completed. His unusual ability to design as well as cut beautiful inscriptions eventually made the shop known far beyond the boundaries of Newport. John Howard Benson cut the Endicott Peabody Memorial in the Groton School chapel, the Second World War Memorial at Phillips Exeter Academy (with a hundred and forty-seven names), and the tablet over the entrance of the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, among many others. He became widely recognized as the best stonecarver-designer in America, but the income from stonecarving was not sufficient to feed a wife and three sons, and so he developed and taught courses at the Rhode Island School of Design, in Providence, and also reorganized its sculpture department, and became a famous personage there, with a hall named in his honor. He was a powerful-looking man, six feet four inches tall, but his health gave out, and when he died he left very little besides the shop and a small group of dedicated friends and admirers.

FONT

I

On its little island in the middle of the font
A lamb looks over its shoulder at the furor
Of what appear to be dolphins and porpoises
Leaping out of the holy water, but the details
Have been erased by ripples from priests' fingers
Moving like moorhens or geese or swans landing.

II

A pagan and one of those awkward Protestants,
I still can imagine beneath the rose window
A font for you and for my own son and daughters.
Prose is a river of words washing your name now
And poetry a fountain of vowels and consonants.
On your forehead all waters are holy waters.

—Michael Longley

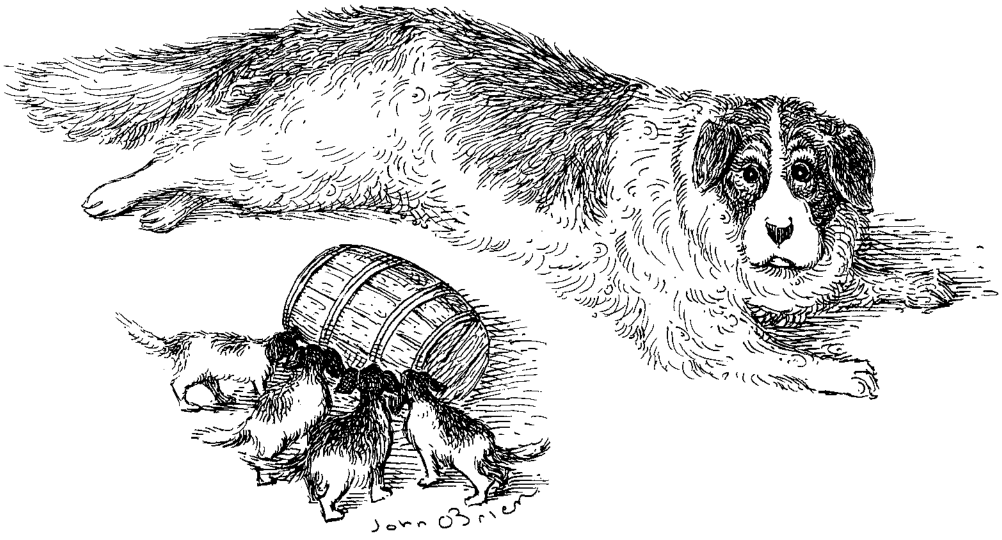
• •

His widow had no choice but to try to keep the shop going. Fisher Benson, as she was called, had learned how to do the bookkeeping during the last years of her husband's life, and now she learned how to cut letters in slate. With the help of James Casey, her husband's former assistant, and Robert Lamb, a sculptor from Providence, she held the business together for ten years, which was the time it took for Fud Benson to master the stonecarver's craft and the more demanding art of designing inscriptions. The dedicated friends and admirers helped by steering commissions their way. Fud's first big job, when he was getting ready to take over the shop, was to cut the inscription for the John F. Kennedy Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery.

XMAS
XMAS
ORNAMENTS
d. ehrenberg

I went to see Fisher Benson, who is eighty-two, clearheaded, and full of humor, in the red house on Washington Street. Her laugh and some of her inflections sound just like her youngest son's. "The shop never earned much, but I think the boys were happy growing up here," she told me. "Chip was an awfully good child. Maybe it was because he knew I had to run the shop. He was so intelligent, and he could see that his good behavior made life easier for me. Chip is less of a perfectionist than Fud. He's a different kind of human being. Whenever Tom or Fud had something serious to talk about, he went to Chip—they both thought he had more brains than they did."

For Chip's fifteenth birthday, his mother gave him a Model A Ford. She told him he had a year to get it running, before he turned sixteen and got his driver's license. "Can you imagine anyone giving you as good a present as that?" Benson asked me. "My brother Tom had got interested in Model A's because he could turn them into hot rods. He was eight years older than I was, and he taught me how to fix it. I'll never forget, we towed this dead Model A of mine home, and he said, very matter-of-fact, 'Got to get the engine out,' and he stood up on the frame, put a rope around the engine and around his neck, and he just went '*Uhh*'—picked it up like that and walked off with it. Two hundred and fifty pounds." Chip already knew quite a lot about machines by then. For two summers, he had worked for a man who had a little machine shop down on



Bowen's Wharf, learning how to run a lathe and fix boat engines. (Bowen's Wharf is now a tourist attraction, rebuilt to accommodate expensive boutiques and restaurants.) Some of Mrs. Benson's friends in town asked how she could stand to have those old cars in her yard—Tom's and Chip's—and she said she liked it fine, because she always knew where two of her boys were. Chip has since owned several Model A's; he bought the current one three years ago, from a man on Block Island who had found it in the garage of his new house.

In spite of their money problems, the Bensons managed to finance some private schooling for all three sons. Chip spent his high-school years at St. George's School in Newport; the social-security payment for children under eighteen that Mrs. Benson received after her husband's death just covered the tuition. He entered Brown University in 1961, but left after one semester. He told the president of the university, Barnaby Keeney, that he was quitting because he wanted to work with his hands and nobody did that there. He enlisted in the Navy, as Tom had done. At boot camp, he scored so high on the aptitude test that he was asked what school he wanted to be sent to, and, having been fascinated throughout his childhood by telescopes and astronomy, he chose optical-repair school. He was assigned to an optical-repair ship berthed in Norfolk, Virginia, and spent the next two years there fixing telescopes and binoculars and cameras. Living on the ship, and having little to do in his off-hours, he began spending his biweekly paycheck on art books. "I used to buy an art book every two weeks," he told me. "I spent all my time looking at them. That's how I got interested in pictures."

Discharged from the Navy at the age of twenty-one, he followed in his father's footsteps by spending a few months at the Art Students League, studying sculpture. He came home when his money ran out, and got some more instruction from Robert Lamb, the sculptor who was helping Mrs. Benson in the John Stevens Shop. He even tried his hand at cutting letters in the shop, but the dust made his eyes and his sinuses act up too badly. This relatively unfocussed period came to an end when he married his childhood sweetheart and moved away from Newport.

Richard Benson had only one real girlfriend when he was growing up. Her name was Barbara Murray, and she lived in Jamestown, just across the bay from Newport. They met at a scavenger hunt in 1957, when they were both thirteen. "I took one look at Chip and said I wanted to be on his team," Barbara recalls. "We went to his mother's house, where, of course, we found everything on the list." They got married in 1966, and decided that if the marriage was going to have a chance they would have to move away. "I had two brothers who dominated me completely," as Chip explains it, "and her mother was very difficult. Besides which, although my mother is a great lady, she really and truly devotes herself too exclusively to the men in her life. My brothers and I had a great problem understanding women as a result. Barbara cured me of it. We worked all that out."

The couple moved to Meriden, Connecticut. Barbara taught in a public school there, and Chip got a job with the Meriden Gravure Company. Harold Hugo, who ran Meriden Gravure, had been a great friend of John Howard Benson's. They had met when Benson, looking for someone to reproduce an eighteenth-century account book of the John Stevens Shop, was told that the man to do it was Hugo, whose high-quality printing firm specialized in art books. Hugo printed the account book, and later they worked together on a very beautiful small edition of Lodovico degli Arrighi's "Operina," the first printed manual of lettering (issued originally in 1522, in Rome), which Benson had had translated. Benson kept a letterpress in the basement of his house, and he printed a book on it himself, on the flags of Rhode Island. Fud and Chip used to sneak down to the basement and use the press to print up movie passes and passes to the Newport Naval Base. Printing had appealed to Chip, with his love for machines, and when he went to see Harold Hugo it was to ask his advice about finding a job as a letterpress printer. Hugo said his firm needed an offset printer and offered to train him, and Chip found his métier.

Offset lithography was developed in the early twentieth century as a cheap, efficient way of reproducing visual information on the printed page. It involves photographing an image through a mesh screen, or grid, which breaks the image down into a pattern of dots. The dot pattern, called a halftone, is then transferred, photomechanically, to a rubber blanket, which, mounted on a revolving drum, replicates the image in ink on paper. In its early days, offset was considered much too crude for anything but the cheapest commercial uses. Fine-art and photography books and magazines were printed for the most part by the gravure process, which, like etching, requires the copying of images onto copper plates, and is very expensive. As the offset process was refined, however, the tonal range and the quality got better. The great advantage of offset lithography was that the rubber blanket touched the paper very lightly (in con-

"I wish you a happy holiday, Ed, even though the leading indicators don't point to it."

trast to the heavy stamp of the metal plate in gravure or letterpress), and a sheet could therefore be put through the press several times. The tonal range of black-and-white reproductions was improved in the nineteen-fifties and sixties by the development of the duotone process, which used two halftone negatives in succession, one for the black end of the gray scale and the other for the lighter end. It also became possible to print the image in full color, using four separate halftone negatives, each one in a different primary-color range.

By the late nineteen-fifties, offset was being used successfully to reproduce paintings and other works of art in books, but when Benson started work at Meriden Gravure the offset process was still not very good at reproducing photographs. "If you think about printing in ink on paper," Benson explained to me, "the hardest possible thing to print is a photograph. A photograph has tremendously high resolution, because it comes from a lens. It's also highly tonal, which is something that ink tends not to be. High resolution, complicated tonality, and the fact that a photograph is seamless, that it has no physical texture—all that makes it incredibly difficult to reproduce. At any rate, I got obsessed with this problem. Part of the reason was that from the beginning of my working at Meriden I got more and more interested in photographing, and in learning what a photograph was. One of the few things I remember about my old man is that he taught me how to photograph, with an old three-and-a-quarter-by-four-and-a-quarter Graflex camera, which I still have. But I didn't ever do anything serious about it until I went to Meriden, in the sixties. Then I really got caught up with learning those two things, photography and printing, and I also got caught up with the idea of putting them together."

Harold Hugo encouraged his interest. He installed a big process camera for Benson to use for making halftones, and gave him one day a week off to experiment with it. Hugo wanted him to come into the office eventually and help run the company, but Benson balked at that. "I realized right away that I was just interested in making things, and not in wearing a tie and being in an office." For seven years at Meriden, he worked on and thought about the problem of how to reproduce photographs more accurately in ink, all the while handling the wide variety of printing jobs that were assigned to him; along the way, he became such a skilled printer, with an eye for details and a passion for getting them right, that a number of Meriden's clients took notice of him. Doris Bry, who was then Georgia O'Keeffe's agent, business manager, and main link to the art world, got to know Benson when he worked on a portfolio of O'Keeffe drawings that she had commissioned from Meriden Gravure, and she decided that he was the person to reproduce Alfred Stieglitz's photographs. The Museum of Modern Art had wanted to do a catalogue for the Stieglitz memorial show in 1947, but the plan had fallen through because, among other reasons, the museum couldn't get good enough reproductions; this problem had been in the back of Bry's mind ever since. Leslie Katz, who ran a fine-edition publishing house in New York called the Eakins Press, also got interested in Benson's work at Meriden. Katz cared a lot about improving the quality of photographic reproduction, and eventually he enlisted Benson as a printer for several of his books, including Lee Friedlander's "The American Monument."

Benson and Katz were not the only innovators in this field. During the nineteen-sixties, Sidney Rapoport, in New York, and Jean Genoud, in Lausanne, both oversaw the development, in their printing firms, of improvements in photographic reproduction. Benson's advantage over them, as he sees it, was that he was doing the thinking and was also doing the work himself. "I'm probably the first person who was completely engaged intellectually by the photograph and by the problems of tonality and the problems of ink, and who at the same time physically tried to figure the thing out," he told me. His eventual solution, which involved using three halftone negatives instead of two, sounds like a relatively modest advance over the duotone process, but in effect it was a great deal more complex; to achieve its best results, Benson's method requires a printer with Benson's extraordinary eye and his sensitivity to gradations of tone. What came to be called the tritone process (the name was not coined by Benson) evolved in the mid-seventies, when Benson and Bry were working together on a group of Stieglitz prints. "I got the idea that maybe I could learn to make a picture by using three impressions—instead of using a black and a gray, using a black and two

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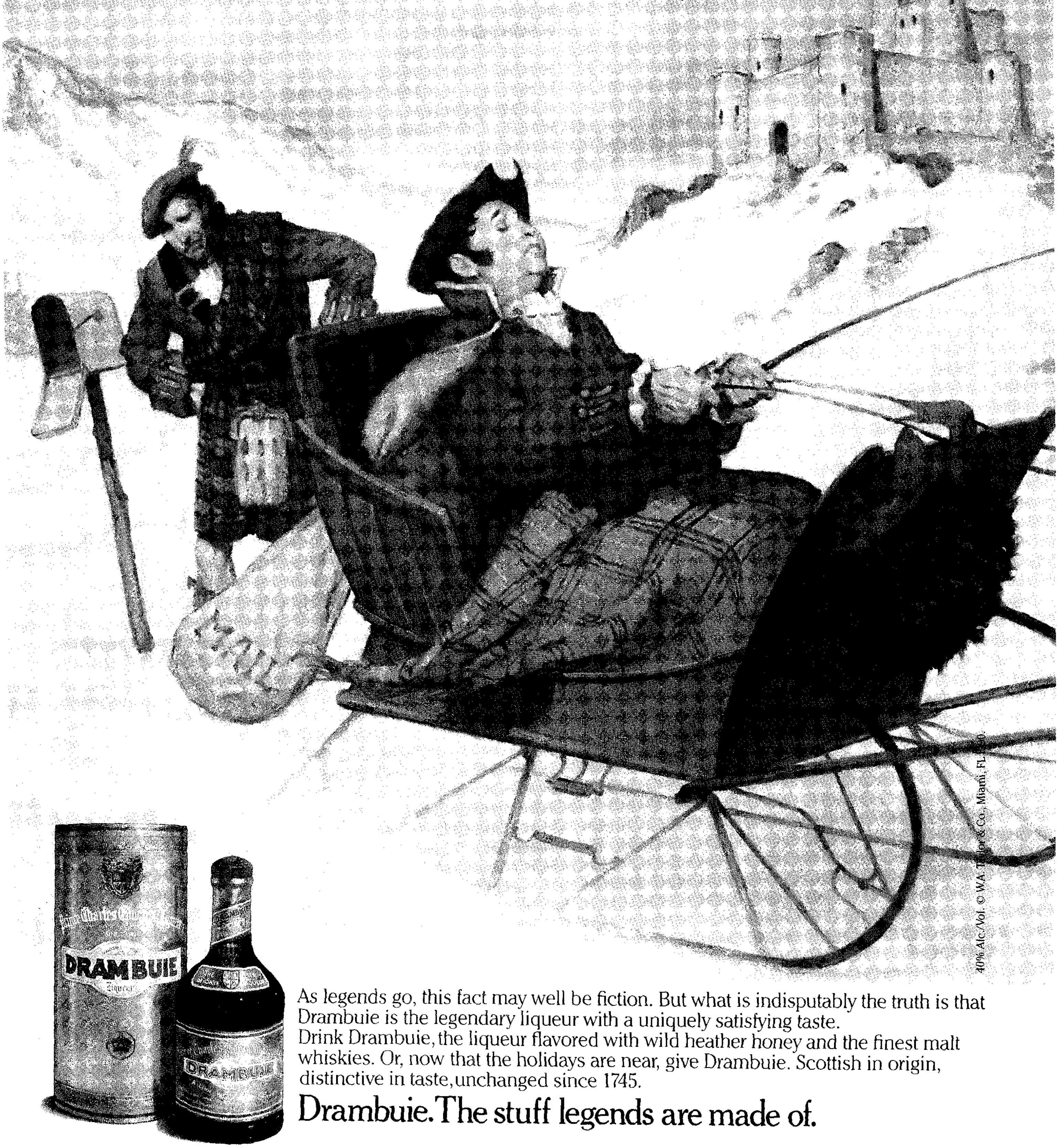

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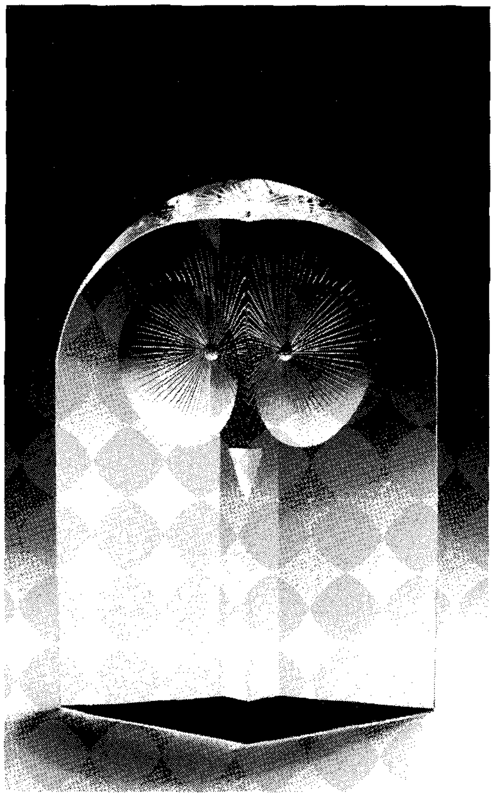

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grays, one dark and one light," Benson told me. "Doris and I worked on proofing half a dozen Stieglitz prints. By that, I mean Doris sat there and said to me, 'That's no good, that's no good, that's no good—that's right!' And I'd try to figure out how to do this and that. I ended up working out a system, which I use to this day, of breaking apart the tonality of a photograph and reconstituting it with a black ink and two gray inks." Although Benson's system was used to print the monograph "Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings," which was published in 1982 by the National Gallery and Callaway Editions, Benson was not the printer. He removed himself from the project, because Georgia O'Keeffe, Stieglitz's widow and executor, who had been supporting his and Bry's research financially, decided to dump Bry as her agent, associate, and confidant in favor of a young man named Juan Hamilton, who had recently come to work for her in New Mexico. Benson told O'Keeffe, in a long and painful telephone conversation, that she was making a big mistake, and that if she persisted in it he could not do the book. O'Keeffe told him that he was a foolish young man who had spent a lot of time learning how to do something, "and you needn't have bothered."

Benson had left Meriden Gravure long before this. "Meriden paid absolute slave wages," he said. "Six days a week, and my gross pay when I started was ninety dollars." He quit in 1972, and moved with his family to Hartford, Connecticut, where they bought a house in the kind of neighborhood that real-estate agents circumvent. The Bensons now had two adopted children, Sarah and Luke, both of whom were part black. "By the time you adopt a child, you're pretty desperate for one," Benson said to me. "We found out that the agencies were full of mixed-race children whom nobody would take, and the more we thought about it the more we realized that we should adopt kids who needed parents as much as we needed children. We applied to adopt Sarah, and we brought her home twenty-seven days later. Anyway, it had become clear to us that it was stupid for us to be living in a white suburb, which was where our beautiful old house in Meriden had been. So we bought a house in a neighborhood in Hartford that people were

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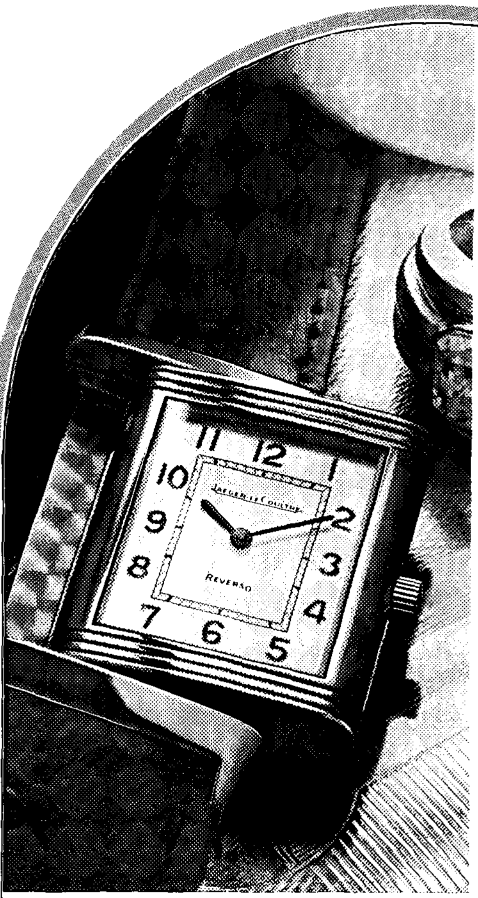

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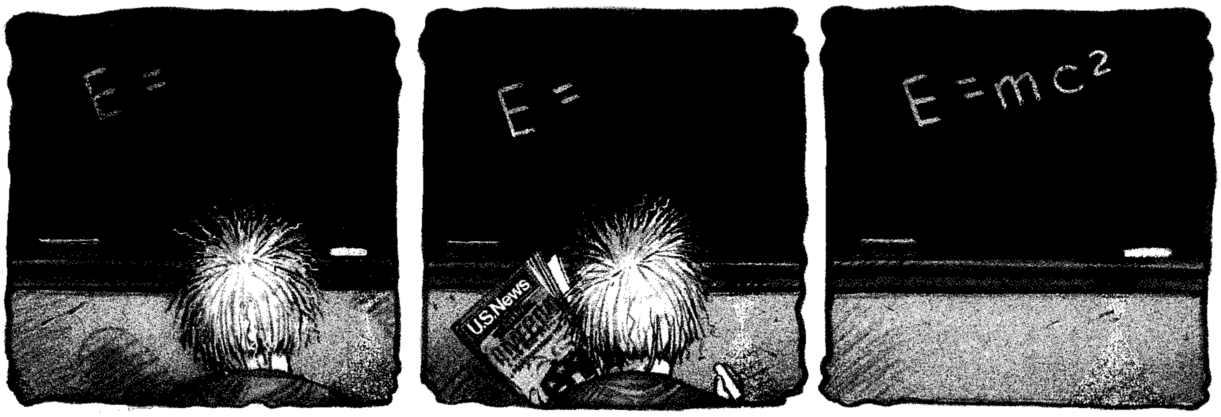
fleeing because non-whites were moving in, and we got a wonderful house dirt-cheap. It was a great place to live and a great place to raise kids."

For a year or more, it was touch and go for them financially. Leslie Katz, who had become a sort of surrogate father to Benson, helped out by arranging for him to meet Lincoln Kirstein. "I went down to New York and rang his doorbell," Benson recalls, "and this huge, tall man came to the door and said, 'Are you Richard Benson?' I said I was, and he handed me a little box, one of those boxes that eyeglasses used to come in. I opened it, and in it was a whole mess of tiny contact prints of tombstones. 'Your father and I made those in 1930,' he growled. Unbeknown to me, he'd known my old man. They'd gone around New England together photographing old tombstones. Isn't that something? Anyway, Lincoln had this idea of doing a book on his house, which is sort of like the stage set for his life, and over the next year I spent one day a week photographing it. Every week, he gave me a check, and that's what Barbara and I lived on. I used a five-by-seven and an eight-by-ten view camera. No book ever came of it, after all that. Recently, though, he has done a book, with color photographs of the house by Jerry Thompson. It's called 'Quarry: A Collection in Lieu of Memoirs.' "

In a photographic studio that he rented in Hartford, Benson printed limited-edition portfolios of work by other photographers. He did a Walker Evans portfolio and a portfolio of prints by the photographer James Van Der Zee, who was in his nineties at the time. He started to do a Lisette Model portfolio, but it didn't work out, because Benson found Model impossible to deal with. He rephotographed and printed Baron Adolf de Meyer's rare set of photographs of Nijinsky dancing "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune," the negatives of which had been lost, and he did four portfolios of work by Paul Strand, whose eyesight failed about the same time that the demand for his early work went into orbit. "It's a loathsome thing to do, printing a hundred copies of a bunch of negatives by someone else," Benson told me. "I ended up being quite angry at artists who don't do their own work. But I did that for a while, and I also started making halftones for books, which would then be printed at Meriden. Customers would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come to me and I'd make the halftone negatives, and then I'd go down to Meriden with them to oversee the printing."

In 1972, he did a book for the Eakins Press called "Lay This Laurel," with a text by Lincoln Kirstein. The book was a photographic study of the Augustus Saint-Gaudens memorial, in Boston, to Colonel Robert Gould Shaw and the first black volunteer regiment in the Civil War. Benson took the photographs himself, and printed them as well. He built a wooden platform the same height as the memorial, which is in a stone frame that puts it considerably above eye level, and he used an eight-by-ten view camera with a very long lens. His pictures, taken just after dawn, when the light was right and there was no wind to disturb the long time exposures, show the relief modelling of the figures in greater depth and detail than it's possible for the unaided human eye to see. (Sales of this book, which came out in 1973, were reactivated last spring by the release of the film "Glory," dramatizing the story of Colonel Shaw.) "Lay This Laurel" made a strong impression on John Szarkowski, the director of the department of photography at the Museum of Modern Art and probably the most influential figure in the field of modern photography. "What was astonishing to me, and to anybody else who knew about photomechanical reproduction, was that the ink prints in that book were, by the standards of the time, so exquisitely rendered that they seemed magical," Szarkowski remembers. "They were at least as good as the best European gravure. Clearly, he was the person one wanted to talk to about a whole series of opportunities related to that technology." Szarkowski got in touch with Benson, and eventually engaged him to print MOMA's monumental catalogue of the photographs of Eugène Atget, which came out, in four volumes, between 1981 and 1985. Szarkowski feels that Benson's genius as a printer probably has less to do with technical breakthroughs than with the fact that he "brought to this process an artist's sensibility, discretion, taste, and sense of balance."

ALL the time Benson was printing for others, he was also trying to become an artist in the medium of photography. He went off by himself every so often, lugging his big camera and tripod, and took pictures of things that interested him—landscapes and urban scenes, abandoned machinery, ordinary people in particular surroundings. When the Bensons moved back to Newport, in 1975, he photographed its Colonial cemetery (one of the oldest in the United States) and the ramparts of Fort Adams, which had been built to defend the town in the War of 1812. His pictures have a quiet, understated quality that is not easy to read. "They're so dense that very few people can understand them," Fud Benson told me, protectively. "They're really about the relationship between man and nature—about how technology has been the evolved vocabulary of that relationship, and how in the context of the relationship both things have changed, man and nature. Look at this one." We were in the kitchen of the Tilden Avenue house, and Fud was holding up a print of what looked like a derelict steam engine set down in a patch of woods, with underbrush growing over it. "Here's a perfect example. Now, this is fundamentally a piece of eighteenth-century machinery."

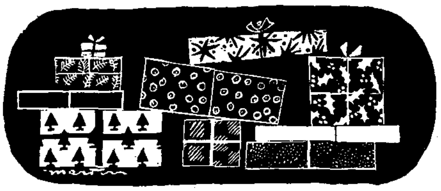
"Maybe nineteenth," Chip corrected him.

"Nineteenth-century machine, eighteenth-century thinking. Anyway, here's an early technological thing, in today's world. And it is being changed by the land that it changed."

"You know what this is?"

"It's a donkey boiler," Fud said. "This is what made our world possible."

One of the characteristics of Benson's work as a photographer is that he takes very few pictures. The great majority of contemporary photographers work the way Benson's friend Lee Friedlander does, by going out with a thirty-five-millimetre camera and shooting rolls and rolls of film, and deciding later which shots they want to enlarge. Benson, using an eight-by-ten view camera almost exclusively, takes fewer than two hundred pictures a year, on the average, out of which he may print twenty or thirty.



"Whether by design or by necessity, I've always made my living by some means other than photography," he said to me. "And I've had years when I thought, Oh, you're not serious about this. I've photographed continually but always with a small percentage of my time. And the truth is, I've come to look askance at the way photography is done today, with people making thousands and thousands of pictures. As I look back on other people's work—and I've come to know a lot of photographers' work by now—it seems to me that even the best of them don't make many good pictures. Look at Garry Winogrand, who made those extraordinary things—he had maybe a hundred great photos in him, but he made a million."

Benson paused and looked at me intently. For a non-stop talker, he shows an unusual interest in his listener's reactions. "Am I making any sense?" he asked, before continuing. "The way people think of photography today comes from the medium's being so simple to use. And I think that in this sense the role of the artist has been perverted by photography. Traditionally, the artist has put tremendous effort into what he makes, but in photography the piece of art is not the container of extensive work and it's not the container of extensive thought. With a painting, we make a mark on canvas, and that tells us what to do next; we keep putting effort into it, and the canvas absorbs the effort and holds it. Photography doesn't work that way. And I think all of us photographers tend to ignore how little we do. Photographers may grasp the big issues, like the frame, the gesture, the trace of the subject, but we lose sight of the fact that, really, technology does most of it. We make the exposure, and this thing comes up like magic in the tray. So, anyway, for the last ten years I've been obsessed with the idea that there's no reason photography can't become more like painting. The ability to point the camera and select the moment and choose the frame and the focus lets you make a picture with incredible force and conviction. Why is it that the things that are great about painting can't be plugged into that?"

Benson's early photographs—platinum prints for the most part, achieved with considerable effort in the darkroom—began appearing in solo and group shows in the mid-nineteen-sev-

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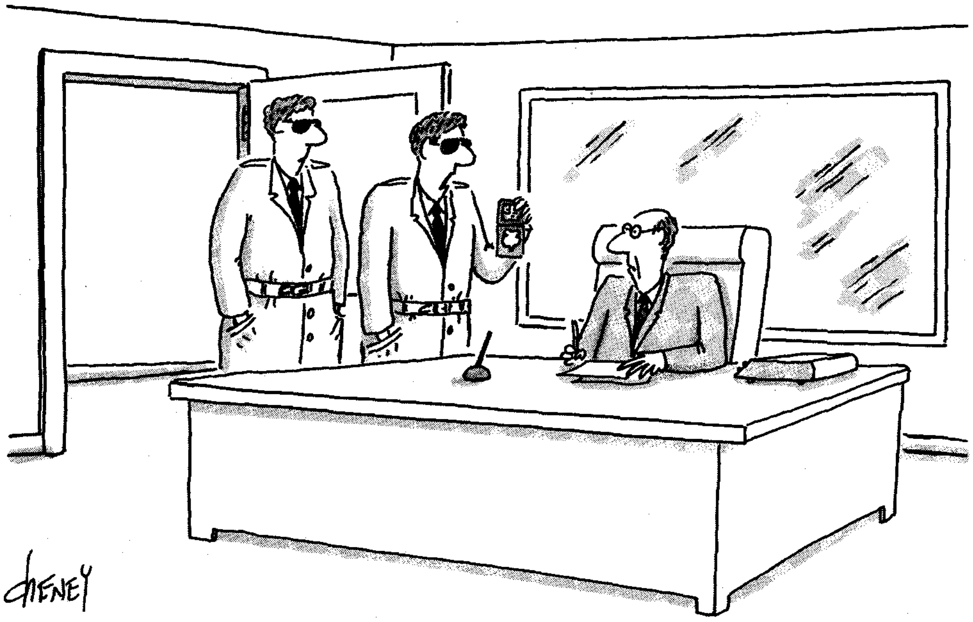


"Federal Bureau of Feelings, sir. It seems that last night you neglected to ask your wife how her day was. You have the right to remain silent."

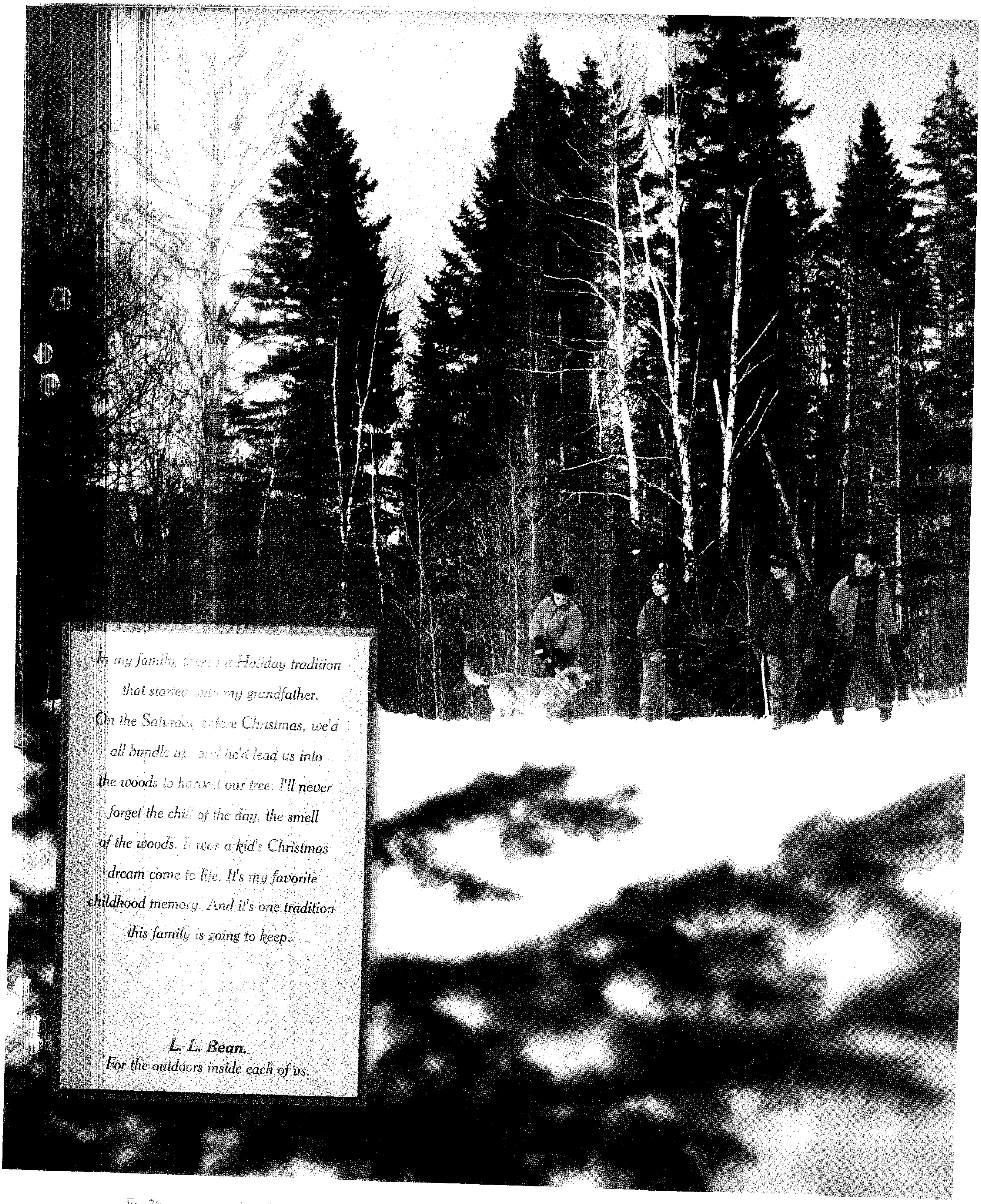
• •

enties. He had his first one-man show in 1976, in New York, when the Washburn Gallery, on Fifty-seventh Street, showed his prints of the Shaw Memorial from "Lay This Laurel," and Joan Washburn has continued to show his new work. The Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum have acquired prints of Benson photographs, and so have a few private collectors. The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation gave him two separate grants, in 1978 and 1986. But his income from photography has barely covered the costs involved, and the financial strains of raising and educating four children—Barbara gave birth to Abby in 1975 and Daniel in 1977—have kept him working as a printer. Starting in 1978, he was able to supplement his income the same way his father did, by teaching. Three years earlier, the photography department of the Yale School of Art had invited him to be one of several outside professionals who would come and comment on student work at a year-end review. Another guest reviewer that year, Tod Papageorge, had since become the head of the department; when a job opened up on his staff, he got in touch with Benson and suggested that he apply for it. Benson applied, got the job, and discovered that he loved teaching. He commutes to New Haven from Newport two days a week, in the Model A, to teach graduate classes in photography. His special area is darkroom technique, but naturally he veers off into many other areas as well. He won't let his students take notes when he lectures, and he constantly pushes them to find things out on their own.

"There's a terrible problem I run into in teaching, which is that when you tell people something, you keep them from ever knowing it," Benson explained to me. "If they find it on their own, they'll know it in a way they never will if you tell them. What I try to do more and more is to bring my students up here to my studio and get them really working." Although he finds it a little strange that young people should go to college to learn to be artists, he believes that he can be useful to them. "I certainly let them know that it's a very dubious thing to be a professor," he said. Yale has renewed his appointment each year since 1978, and he now holds the rank of full adjunct professor—"adjunct" meaning that he doesn't have to do committee work or attend meetings. "His knowledge is on a different level from that of anyone else in the field," according to Papageorge, "and he's the best public speaker I've ever heard, always clear and to the point." Even students who want the answers and shy away from darkroom drudgery find him charismatic. "He's a sophisticated primitive," David Pease, the dean of the Yale School of Art, says. "He's just the sort of person we love to have around here."

Howard Gilman, the chairman and sole owner of the Gilman Paper Company, began in the nineteen-seventies to buy art works for his firm's Manhattan offices. At first, he bought contemporary paintings, but he also picked up a few photographs, and before long he became so interested in photographs that he decided to concentrate on them exclusively. Guided by an astute curator, Pierre Apraxine, he built a collection that reflects the entire history of photography. (His extensive purchasing also changed the price structure of the photography market, revising it sharply upward.) In 1980, Gilman and Apraxine got in touch with Richard Benson. They wanted to publish a book of the Gilman Paper Company Collection, and they wanted his advice on how to do it in the best possible way. Benson told them that the best possible way would be for them to buy him a printing press (something he had been wanting for years), and to make the book in a small enough edition so that he could print it himself. They agreed. They bought him a Meihle twenty-nine-inch offset press, a German machine that was being made obsolete by automation, and had it installed in the basement of his house in Newport. He insisted on printing each photograph separately (rather than on a sheet containing two photographs or more), and the prints had to be tipped into the book by hand, so that he could print them on different kinds of paper.

Benson worked on the Gilman book for nearly five years. The result, published in 1985, was an outsized volume containing two hundred photographs, which ranged historically from William Henry Fox Talbot's circa-1840 "photogenic drawing" of a leaf, one of the first successful photographic images on paper, to Diane Arbus's arresting portrait of a "Girl in a Watch Cap," dated 1965-68. Benson and Thomas Palmer, a young assistant whom he was training as a printer, made twelve hundred prints of each photograph (the edition was twelve hundred copies), in a process that involved putting most of them through the press many times. Benson used up to nine different colors to get the black-and-white effects he wanted. It is without question the finest book of photographic reproductions ever published, and major museums and



In my family, there's a Holiday tradition that started with my grandfather. On the Saturday before Christmas, we'd all bundle up, and he'd lead us into the woods to harvest our tree. I'll never forget the chill of the day, the smell of the woods. It was a kid's Christmas dream come to life. It's my favorite childhood memory. And it's one tradition this family is going to keep.

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serious photography collectors lost no time in ordering copies, at twenty-five hundred dollars apiece—a good deal less than the cost of producing them.

Benson had more or less invented a new method for every book he worked on. This time, he was taking the fullest advantage of offset lithography's ability to build up an image through multiple impressions. "I found that the only way to reproduce some of those old photos was to take them apart and put them back together," he explained [illegible] me. "In other words, I might have an early print that had purple and yellow and brown tones, light in some parts and dark in others. I found that if I made a series of halftone negatives of it I could build it back layer by layer, using those colors. I could reconstruct the picture in a way that was the complete opposite of darkroom technique. And I got interested in the possibility of making my own pictures that way, in stages. After the Gilman book was finished, I got the MacArthur grant. I used the first year of the grant to get out of debt. I was in terrible, terrible debt, because I'm an idiot about money and I'd been living beyond my means continually. But then, in the second year of the MacArthur, I began to think about applying some of the things I'd learned with the Gilman book to my own work in photography. I wanted to build up the photographic image in stages, as I'd done with the Gilman pictures, but I also wanted to be able to see what I was doing, so that I could proceed step by step. And I also got the idea that maybe I could do it with paint, instead of with chemicals. That's what led to this completely ridiculous process where I now spend a whole day making *one print*."

I watched part of the process one July afternoon, in the darkroom at the rear of the Benson house. Benson was working on a picture he had taken on a trip to North Carolina that spring. He had set up his view camera and tripod on the deck of a small ferry that takes cars and people over to Ocracoke Island, just south of Cape Hatteras, and he had made a picture that was almost abstract: it showed the metal deck of the ferry, the chain across the stern, the white, churning water of the wake, and, across a stretch of open sea, a line of low gray hills. He had made three different halftone positives and one negative from his original eight-by-ten negative, each one representing a dif-

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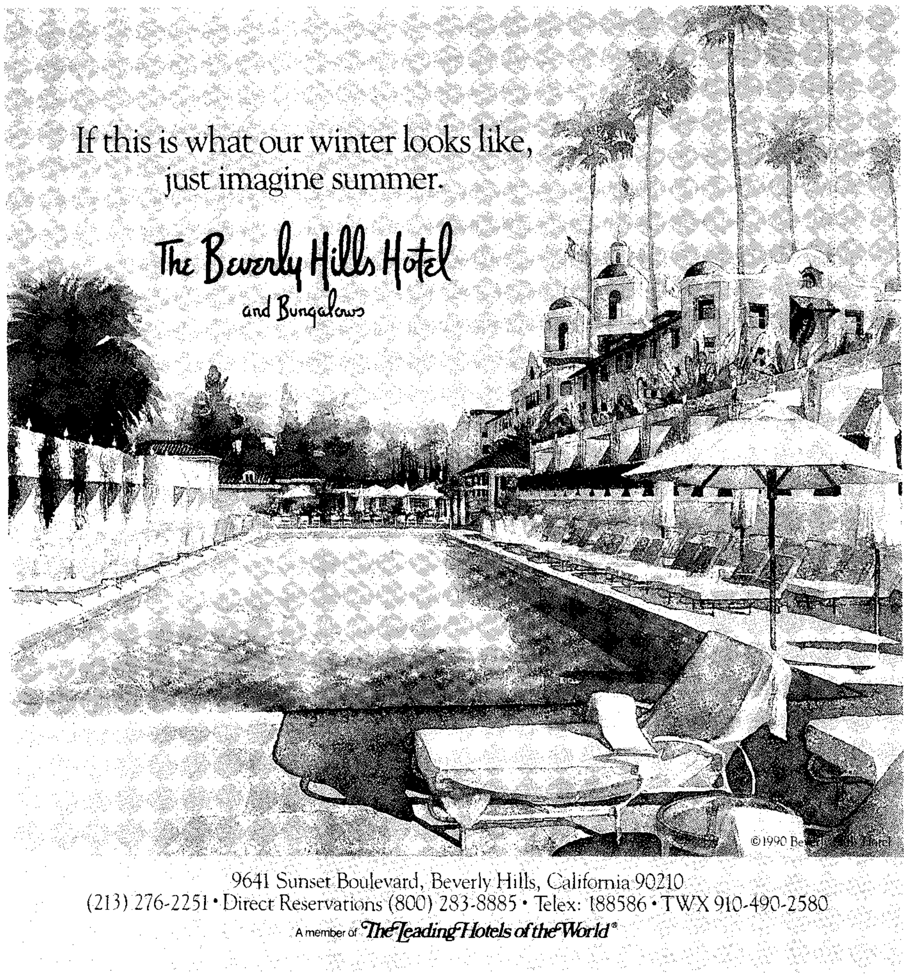
ferent range of the gray scale. That day, he was working with those halftones, building up the image in acrylic paint on a very thin sheet of aluminum that he kept coating and re-coating with a homemade light-sensitive gelatine solution. Photographic paper would never stand up to the rigors of this process, he explained. Aluminum sheets that had been discarded by printing companies after one use and reclaimed by Benson worked fine, though, and they had the added advantage of durability: he nailed one to the outside of his house a year ago, and it has shown no signs of fading.

When he explained the process to me earlier, I had misunderstood him, thinking that it took place on the offset press in the basement. Not at all. He makes his acrylic prints by hand, in his darkroom, with the lights on, since the gelatine solution he uses is sensitive only to blue light. I was struck by the makeshift character of his working space. One big tray served for all the various immersions of the aluminum sheet, and he dried the sheet in between baths with an automobile windshield wiper and a hair dryer. He kept up a jaunty barrage of explanations through every step of the process. First, he showed me the partly finished aluminum sheet under a strong light. At this point, he said, he wanted to make the water at the boat's stern look whiter, so he was going to put down another layer of white paint in that area—and in that area alone. "The idea of light-sensitive gelatine has been around for more than a hundred years," he noted, "but nobody has ever used it quite this way, to control paint layers."

In the undark darkroom, he poured a solution of Knox gelatine and light-sensitive chromate into the lone tray, slid the aluminum sheet into it and out again quickly (so bubbles would not collect on the surface), squeegeed it with the windshield wiper and blow-dried it with the hair dryer, and then, settling it into a printing frame and covering it carefully with the halftone positive whose dot pattern conformed to the white water area, he exposed sheet and halftone to an intense blue light for thirty seconds. "Here where the dot pattern is dark, the gelatine is not exposed to the light," he said, "and where it's not exposed I can wash it away easily with warm water." The blue light hit the gelatine everywhere except in the white area of the boat's



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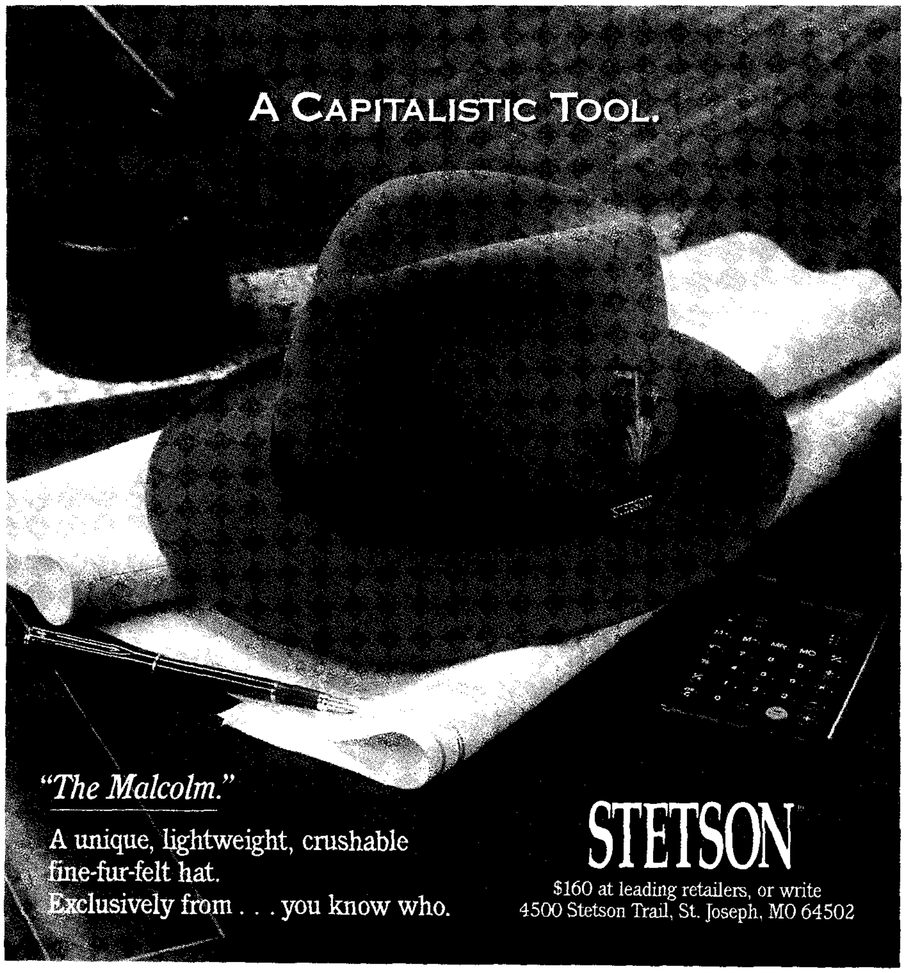

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wake. Benson took the plate out of the frame and washed away the gelatine in the wake area, using running water from the tap, and hung it up to dry. He washed out the tray, drained it, and poured in a small amount of white paint thinned with water. When the panel was dry, he immersed it in the paint, deftly and quickly, as before. He hung it up so that the paint layer would drain evenly, and then he placed the panel on his drying easel—a heavy steel plate propped upright, with an ancient two-burner hot plate plugged in behind it as a heating unit. The drying took about ten minutes. Afterward, he washed the panel for about fifteen minutes in warm water with a cotton ball; that removed the hardened gelatine layer (and the paint) everywhere except in the wake area, where the paint had bonded to the previous paint layers. Then he took the panel and examined it under the strong light. "Better," he said. "The white is a whole step whiter. It makes the water more convincing. But it's not there yet." Two or three more layers of white would be required, he thought, before it took on the luminous quality he was aiming at.

BENSON and Lee Friedlander went to British Columbia in August, for a ten-day photographing trip. They had travelled together once before and had found that they enjoyed each other's company, kept the same hours (going to sleep before ten and getting up at four or five), and didn't get in each other's way professionally. "We use such different equipment it's almost as if we weren't in the same world," Friedlander told me. "Once, we were driving together down South, and he suddenly looked back and said, 'My God, did you see *that*?' I thought we must have just passed Sophia Loren, or something. 'Do you mind if we turn back?' he said. Of course, I agreed—I really wanted to see what it was we'd missed. It turned out to be this big pile of rust—some old steam engine. That's the kind of stuff he's interested in." According to Benson, it was the engine of an old-time Mississippi riverboat, quietly disintegrating on the Yazoo Diversion, near Vicksburg. "I made a great picture, but I screwed up the negative," he said ruefully.

Although Friedlander feels that Benson's new process has produced "the most beautiful photographic prints I've ever seen," he himself has

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLES PURVIS

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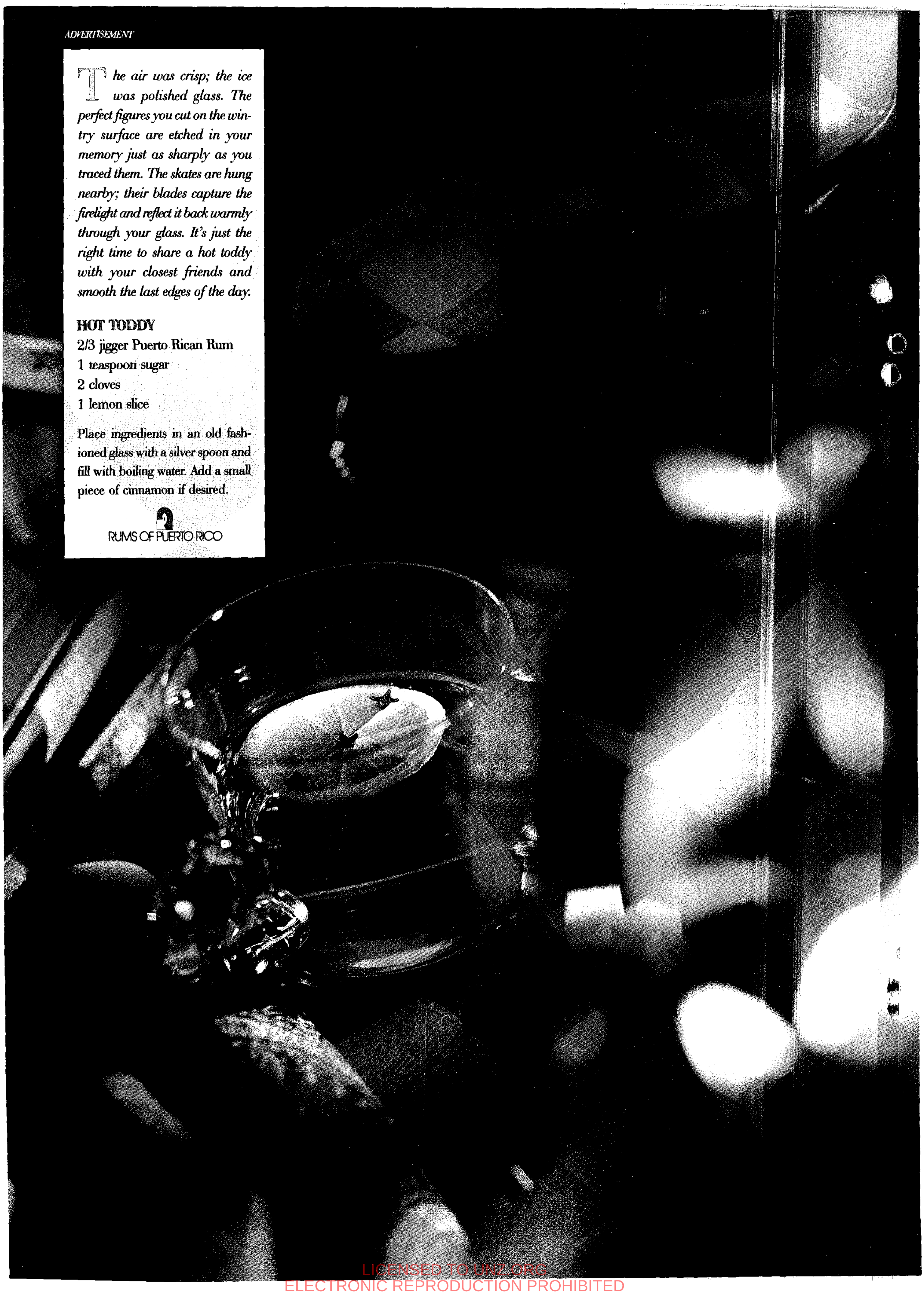

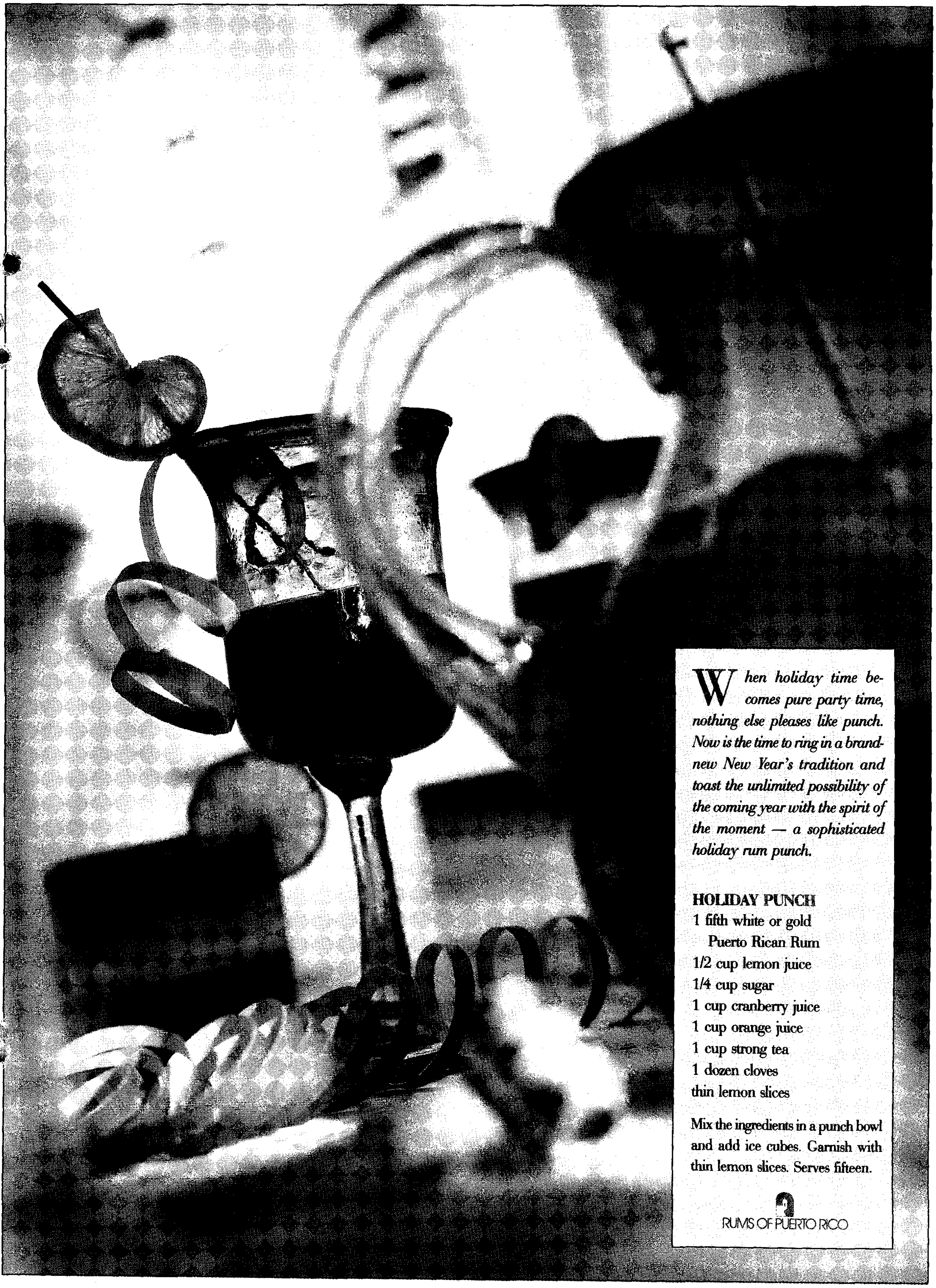

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RUMS OF PUERTO RICO

no interest in learning the process. "It has revolutionized photography for him, but I don't think anybody else will be able to do it," he told me.

Several other people I talked with felt the same way. Tod Papageorge thinks the acrylic prints are fine for Benson but too elaborate for anyone else. "He's one of a kind, and he has created a process that's one of a kind," Papageorge said. John Szarkowski, who included a Benson photograph in his recent historical show at MOMA, "Photography Until Now," agrees that the acrylic prints are "astonishing," but he has mixed feelings about the need for making them. "It seems to me that he's reinvented the daguerreotype," Szarkowski said last summer. "I don't know about all that terrific effort and sensitivity and knowledge and art going to make a unique photograph. It's hard for me to tell whether Richard is avant-garde or old-fashioned, and I don't know if I care, either. He has made some wonderful pictures. He made a picture of a little skiff floating on the water which is a magical picture, really felt; he saw something that not everybody would see, and he saw it with absolute clarity. As for his new process, the only thing necessary for it to be right is for it to produce some interesting new work. If it does that, it's right. Let me put it this way: I hope that Richard's best work as a photographer is ahead of him."

Benson came back from British Columbia with what was for him a huge photographic haul—forty black-and-white negatives and twenty in color. He showed me some of the color transparencies, which he would print—or decide not to print—when he found time. They were wilderness landscapes, for the most part, but the focus was particular rather than general. One transparency showed a giant fir tree that had broken off about ten feet up, leaving a jagged, splintered stump. Another looked down on a stretch of fast-running greenish-white water (a stream carrying mineral runoff from a glacier, he said), with a rickety man-made wooden apparatus of some sort—maybe the remains of a miner's sluice—leaning out from the bank. There was a joke shot of an elk, close up, staring over low underbrush straight into the lens, as though posing for its formal portrait. Benson thought maybe it was the first picture of a wild elk ever taken with an eight-by-ten view camera. He

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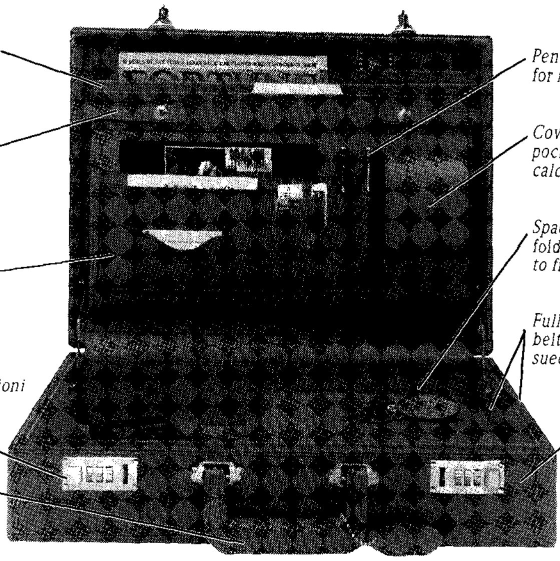

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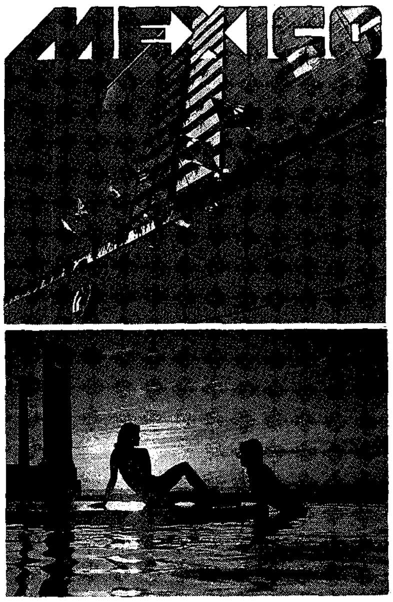

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didn't know when he would be able to do anything with the new work. The Paul Strand book was going to press in two weeks, and four or five other printing jobs were in the pipeline. "You know, I am actually a great printer," he said to me, in his matter-of-fact way. "If somebody comes to me and says, 'Print me this picture in a book,' I can probably do it better than anybody else. But I've worked terribly hard to be a good photographer, which is a much more difficult thing, because it's about going out into the world and seeing. A picture is probably the most complicated thing you can make."

We were sitting in the front room of his house, slightly removed from the comings and goings of teen-age children. Mokie, the Bensons' vastly docile white Samoyed, lay near or on our feet, panting heavily. The hairs of his long white coat get into everything, but Benson hasn't the heart to keep him out of the darkroom. I asked Benson whether in his efforts to make photography more like painting he wasn't perhaps going against the essential nature of the medium—its ability to catch and preserve a unique yet infinitely reproducible moment in time.

"I don't think I am," he replied. After a pause, he leaned forward, staring at me intently, and said, "Look, this is hard to be clear about, but I'll try. First of all, there are pictures like this"—he picked up a framed watercolor seascape, with a rocky shoreline and sunset colors, that had been propped, for some reason, against the fireplace. It was by William Trost Richards, a nineteenth-century artist who lived and painted in Newport, and it had been given to Benson's grandparents by the painter as a wedding present. "That is a fine picture in that it evokes a place," he said. "Now, it seems to me that there are two great things about photography. One is the instantaneous net that it casts out onto the world, grabbing up a whole bunch of information. And the other great thing is the synthesis that the photographer makes with the camera, and the eye, and the finger. The decision as to where the net is thrown. And the moment it's thrown. And the meaning of all the things as they sit together in the frame. O.K.? Does that make sense? But now my problem, as a photographer, is that this is never enough for me. I love the net, I love the casting of it, but then I want, physically, to make

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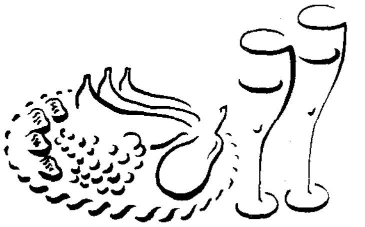

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something like *that*"—he pointed again to the Richards watercolor. "For me, there's a kind of meaning in that physically complex, person-made structure that I demand, to keep me happy as an artist.

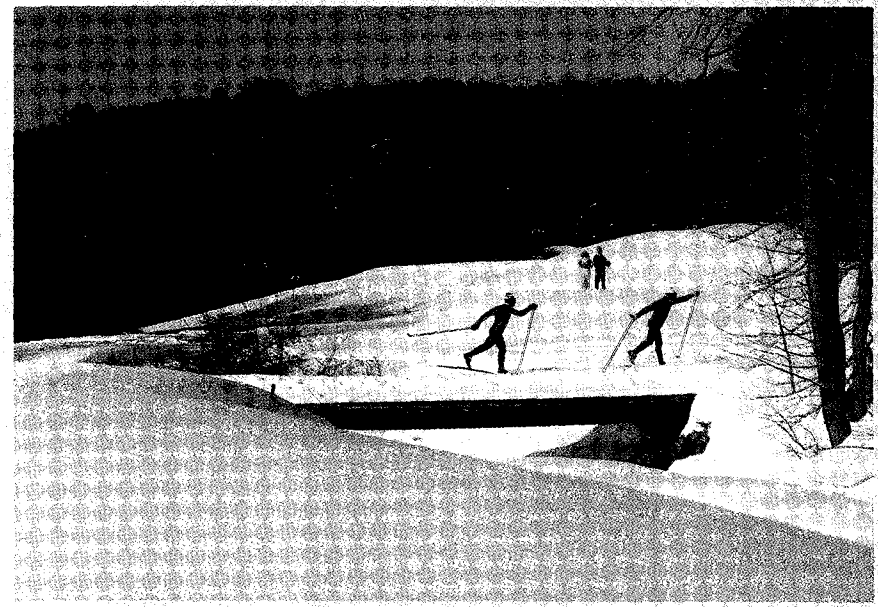
"Maybe the reason photography isn't enough for me is that I don't have the skill at that kind of synthesis of the moment that somebody like Cartier-Bresson has," he said reflectively. "Cartier-Bresson does that particular thing better than anyone else. But, you know, the truth is that I think he's very limited. I think a whole aspect of art is eliminated by the way he works. The same is true of Garry Winogrand. I think Cartier-Bresson and Winogrand are the peak of photography as it's construed now, but I think the medium has to go somewhere else. I remember Lincoln Kirstein's saying to me once that a great photograph could hardly stand on the wall next to a mediocre etching, and that sounds like a scandalous thing to say, but, goddammit, there's a sense in which he's right. Photography has this slippery kind of nonexistence that makes it a minor art. Something's wrong with photography, and I've got this idea that it's because the physical thing we end up making just isn't good enough."

Benson called out to his thirteen-year-old son, Daniel, who was making a certain amount of noise in the kitchen. "Keep it down, Bens," he said. "Would you please?"

After a moment, he went on, "What the hell. I guess you could say that I've revolutionized photography but nobody noticed. I only sold three things from my last show at Washburn. Sometimes I've worried that I'm just a person who knows how to make a good print, and that's all. But in the last four or five years I've decided no, that isn't so—I've decided to take my work seriously. I really think that the work of art has to be the container of effort as well as thought, and I've found a way of putting my effort into the photograph. To me the thing I make is literally the physical container. I want to *make* it! Because I think that's how it becomes the accumulator of effort and of what's in my mind. I want to make pictures the way a painter does, but I love photographs. I truly believe that, yes, painting was dead when photography was invented. But now, you see, I just want the photographs to get better."

—CALVIN TOMKINS

The four seasons of Woodstock, Vermont



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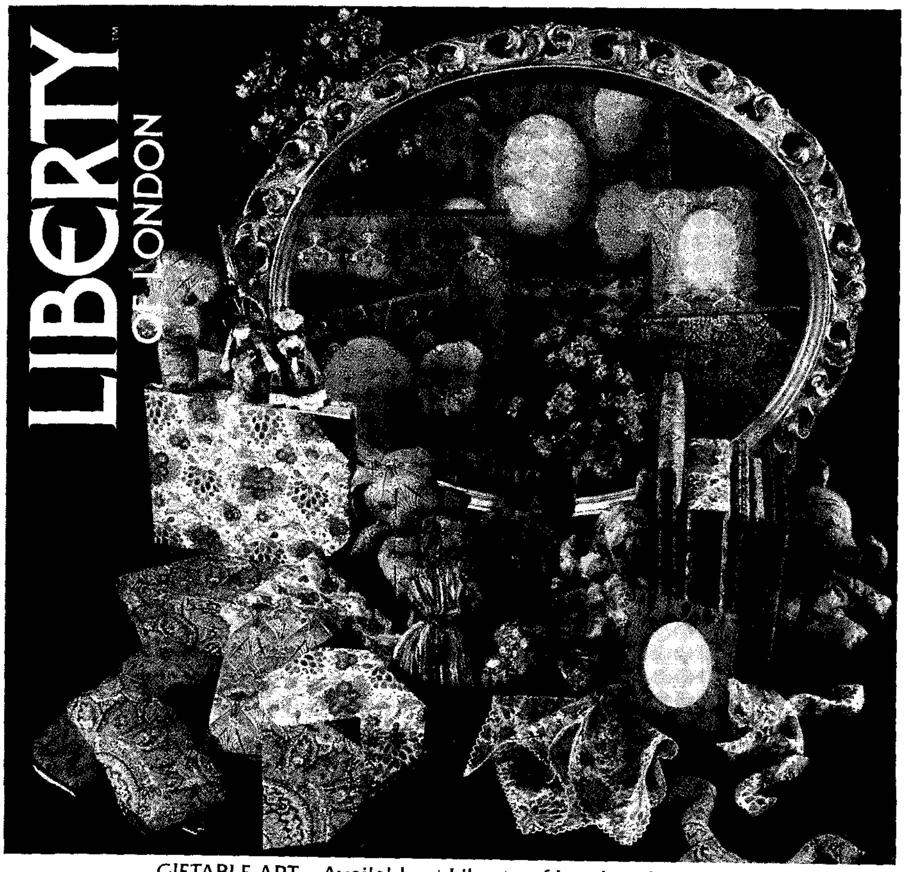

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

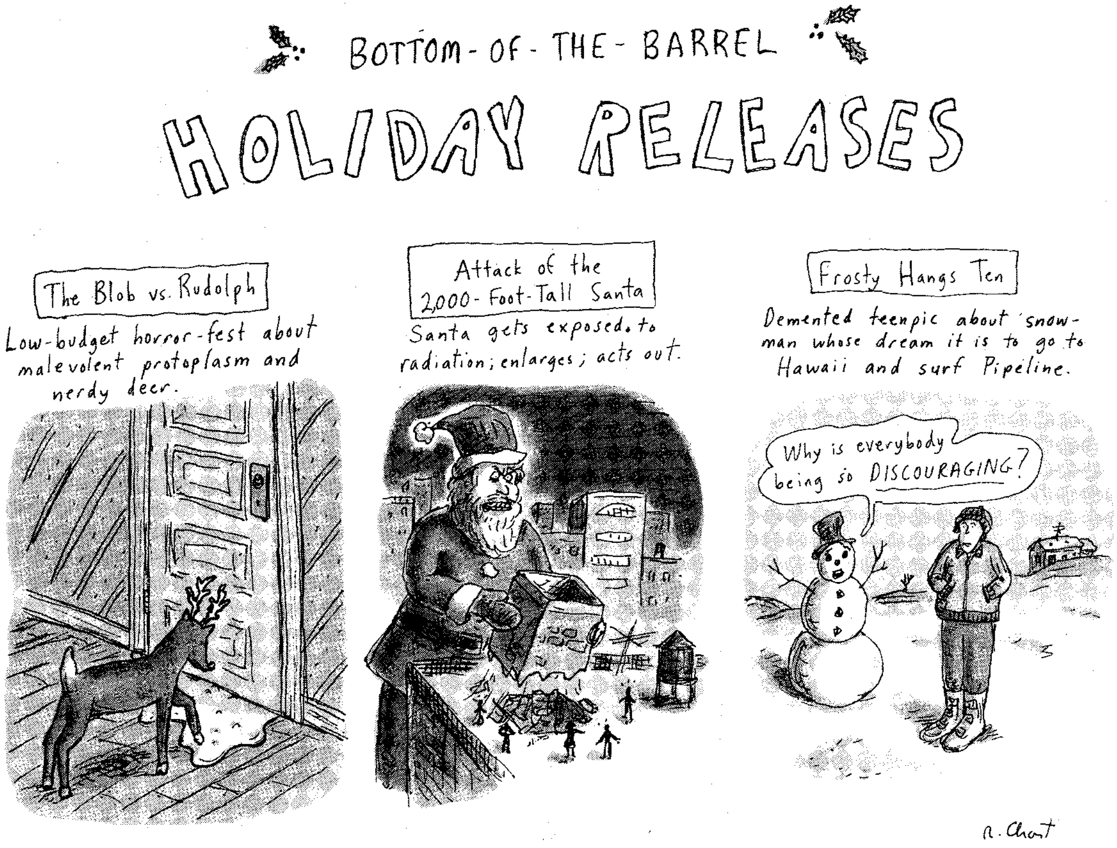
LA FRONTERA

THE most heavily travelled border in the world is a strip of scrubby California desert that runs for fifteen miles between the United States and Mexico, starting at the Pacific Ocean and ending at a thriving yet isolated spot called Otay Mesa. A chain-link fence follows the border for much of its course, but it is torn in many places and trampled in many others, and in some places it has fallen down. Where the fence is still standing, you find litter on both sides of it which illegal aliens have left behind—beer and soda cans, cigarette packs, diapers, syringes, candy wrappers, and even comic-book *novelas* that feature cautionary tales about the perils of a trip to *El Norte*. These *novelas* tell of dishonest employers, horrible living conditions, and the corruptive power of American dollars. In their most dramatic stories, families come apart, brothers murder brothers, and lovers' hearts are broken beyond mending. The stories offer a liberal blend of truth and fiction, but that is an accurate reflection of the border, where nothing is ever absolute.

Between the ocean and the mesa, the only town of any size is San Ysidro, California, just across from Tijuana. About forty-three million people pass through its legal port of entry every year, in vehicles, on bicycles, and on foot, but nobody knows for certain how many undocumented migrants slip illegally over *la frontera*. An educated guess would be about five thousand every day. They come primarily from Mexico and Central America, and they carry their most precious belongings with them in knapsacks or plastic supermarket bags. The Border Patrol, in its San Diego Sector—a territory roughly as big as Connecticut—apprehends about a third of them, logging almost fifteen hundred arrests every twenty-four hours, but the others drift on to Los Angeles or San Francisco or Sacramento, or to farms in the great Central Valley, staying with relatives and friends while they look for work. If they fail to be hired anywhere, they go farther north, to Oregon and Washington, ready to pick fruit or to gut salmon in a packinghouse, willing to do anything to earn their keep.

Like many border towns, San Ysidro is conducive to paranoia. Set in the midst of sagebrush and dry, brown mountains covered with chaparral, it has the harmless look of an ordinary suburb, but this is deceptive and does not hold up under close inspection. For instance, there is a blood bank on the edge of its largest mall, and all day you can watch donors come out the door with balls of cotton pressed to their forearms, bound for a shopping spree at a nearby K mart before going home to Tijuana. The sky above San Ysidro is often full of ravens and buzzards, and skulls of small animals turn up in its playgrounds. Its population is mostly Hispanic, but more and more Anglos—retired people, and people who commute to San Diego—are buying property in the tile-roofed housing tracts that are devouring the last farms and ranches, and they get very angry the first time some illegal aliens dash through their back yards, trampling the shrubbery and pausing to drink from garden hoses.

The Border Patrol is the uniformed arm of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and it is supposed to control the flow of uninvited foreigners into the States. In California, as in Texas, its stations are understaffed and underfunded, and are asked to perform a nearly impossible task. In the San Diego Sector, agents must police all of San Diego County, as well as substantial parts of Orange and Riverside Counties, scouring not only the canyons and the backwoods but also the teeming barrios in cities, where aliens frequently seek shelter. Although the sector captures more illegal aliens than any other sector in the country—more than four hundred and seventy thousand in fiscal year 1990, almost half the United States total—this rec-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Demented teenpic about snowman whose dream it is to go to Hawaii and surf Pipeline.
Why is everybody being so DISCOURAGING?
R. Chast

ord does little for the morale of the agents, since there is no real penalty imposed on those who are apprehended, unless they have some contraband or resist arrest. Mexicans are given a brief interview, then returned to Tijuana, sometimes so quickly that they get caught crossing again on the same night.

The law isn't the only obstacle that the Border Patrol faces in dispatching its duty. It used to be easy for agents to spot new arrivals because they dressed like field hands and looked dirty and frightened, but now the aliens disguise themselves in clothes fresh off the rack, relying on such items as bluejeans, Reeboks, and L.A. Dodgers caps for protective coloration. The business of providing goods and services to migrants has grown enormously, forming a closed economy worth millions, and they have an elaborate network of support, which often involves extended families and functions in the manner of an underground railroad. Then, too, illegal aliens are always testing agents by devising new tricks for sneaking into California. On a hot summer day, they like to put on bathing suits and wander up the coast, or they dive from a boat and swim to shore. They wade through raw sewage in the Tijuana River and slip into Imperial Beach, just north of San Ysidro. They jam themselves into car trunks and into boxcars, and they ride across the border spread-eagled on top of freight trains. The boldest ones merely sprint through the backed-up traffic at the port of entry, defying the Border Patrol to chase them.

Once illegal aliens get by this first line of defense, they can relax and blend into the crowd of legal Hispanics in San Ysidro. They treat the town as a sort of flea market, making connections and buying Stateside necessities, usually on the sly. If they require fake documents —anything from birth certificates to green cards—they seek out a dealer in such papers and begin negotiations. A high-quality document might cost more than a thousand dollars. Only an expert can detect that it's a forgery, while a so-called "fifty-footer" looks bad even at that distance and can be bought without much haggling. If migrants have some pesos to be laundered, they speak to the fellows hanging around the pay phones by the United States Customs gate. Those phones, supplied by half a dozen different com-

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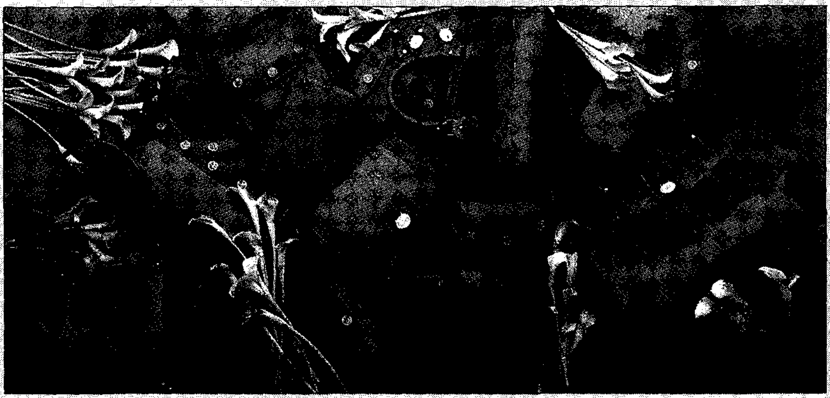

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panies, are the conduit through which a fortune in drug profits—from the sale of cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamines—is annually rerouted. The men who smuggle in aliens use the phones, too, arranging transportation for their customers. The smugglers are known as *coyotes*, on account of their predatory habits, and they flourish on the border, where expediency is the rule of thumb.

In San Ysidro, there are also safe houses, where, for a price, a migrant can hole up for a while. The safe houses look like the houses around them, but everybody on a given block can point them out. As it happens, secrecy tends to play a very limited role in illegal immigration. Anyone who wants to see how openly aliens cross the border, even in broad daylight, can take a drive on Dairy Mart Road, which winds from the outskirts of town through beanfields, pastures, and fallow land scattered with junked farm machinery. On any morning or afternoon, in any season, you'll have to brake to a halt as people streak by in front of your car, speeding from one hiding place to another. For the most part, they are young men in their late teens and early twenties, and they never seem the slightest bit afraid. They emerge from arroyos, from stands of bamboo and pampas grass, from copses of trees, and from vacant buildings. One morning as I cruised on Dairy Mart Road, I counted twenty-two people in a two-hour period.

The action at night is even more spectacular, and it occurs on a much larger scale. At dusk, you start hearing sirens and whistles all over San Ysidro, as if several robberies were in progress, and then comes the chopping sound of helicopter blades slashing up the clouds. Step outside your motel room and you notice beams from above shining down on a Carl's, Jr., restaurant, on kids in baseball uniforms and elderly folks out for an evening stroll. Sometimes a beam illuminates a drainage ditch, and a human form scampers away, like a rabbit rousted from its burrow. It's disconcerting to find normal life going on in what appears to be a suburban war zone. If you walk to a weedy field near the blood bank, you can look toward the concrete levee of the Tijuana River, where, in the glare of I.N.S. floodlights and in full view of the Border Patrol, more than five hundred people will be congregated in little bands, waiting for an opportune moment to begin their journey to the United States.

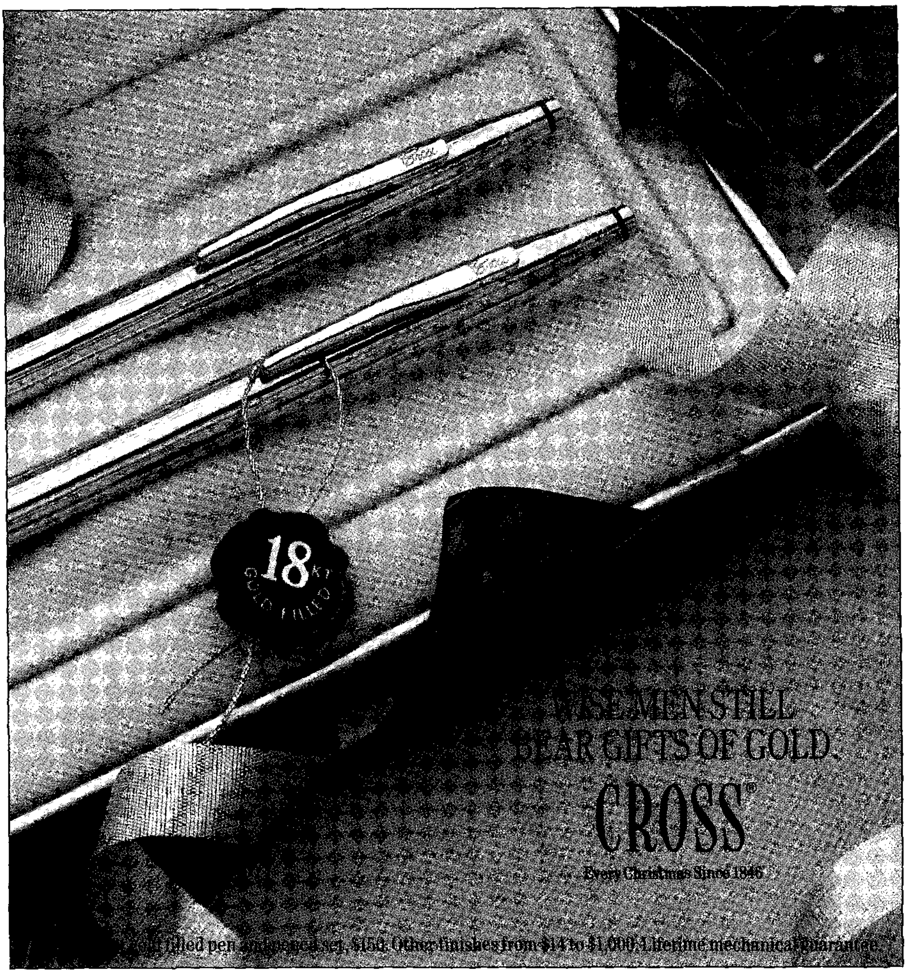
ALL around Tijuana, there are settlements that cater to the needs of people about to cross, and La Libertad, in Canyon Zapata, is one of them. Its most famous entrepreneur is a big, good-natured woman who goes by the name of Manuela. Manuela's friends like to joke that she is a witch, whose supernatural business acumen has permitted her to become well-to-do, at least by the diminished standards of rural Mexico. She has built up a profitable café trade by feeding meals to those who leave for San Ysidro from the base of the canyon, where the ground is so perfectly level that the migrants call it "the soccer field." Hundreds of footpaths are worn into it, fanning out in all directions, and every crack and crevice is stuffed with garbage, which scrawny dogs keep pawing through. Rusty, windowless cars and trucks dot the horizon, because occasionally migrants try driving to the States instead of walking, and they abandon their vehicles if they're foiled by the Border Patrol or by the many potholes, gulleys, and ravines on the way to California.

Manuela is about thirty-five years old. She has bright brown eyes in a handsome, peasant face. Her body is compact and fleshy, and she enjoys gossip and has an earthy sense of humor that makes men want to pinch her. Manuela does not actively discourage the men. Sometimes when she cooks she wears a T-shirt that says, in English, "Poverty Sucks," but she hasn't been poor since she started her business, ten years ago. There were no houses in La Libertad then, but now Manuela owns one on the canyon rim, sharing it with eighteen others, including her nine children, her husband, her two brothers, and an assortment of cousins. The house isn't fancy. It's constructed of plywood and concrete blocks, and has a plastic tarp over a leaky roof. In winter, when a cold wind blows in from the ocean, Manuela's youngest boy, Javier, who is eight, collects cardboard to cram into the walls for insulation.

For Manuela, the working day begins at noon, when she and a few designated children haul her cooking equipment from the house to the canyon. Pots, pans, bottles of peanut oil, tortillas wrapped in paper, tomatoes and onions for salsa, pickled jalapeños, strips of marinated beef—the whole cargo gets carried down in arms and on backs, along with some firewood and some cases of soda and beer. Manuela always sets up in the same place, where she has a wooden picnic table and a blackened oil drum. She starts a fire in the drum and puts an equally blackened grill on top of it. She uses this to roast chickens, to make quesadillas, to heat beans and tortillas, and to sear the beef for *carne asada*. In addition to food she sells cigarettes, mostly black-market Raleighs. Manuela keeps painstaking records in her account books, and they show that she earns about two hundred dollars a month—as much, she says proudly, as a documented maid in San Diego, or the girls at the *maquiladoras*, or twin plants, on Otay Mesa.

Other food venders operate stands in the canyon, but they don't have Manuela's expertise, or her reputation for cleanliness. She does things skillfully, exploiting every opportunity. This is also true of her attitude toward border life. She approaches it as if it were a contest meant to challenge her intelligence, and she takes pleasure in her victories. Like many other Mexican women without documents, she has managed to be in California "accidentally" while she was nine months pregnant, and two of her boys were born in San Diego County and became instant Americans. (Any Mexican can request a border-crossing card that allows day trips to the States. It costs the United States about a hundred and eighty-five dollars to process each one.) Her husband, a plumber, has papers and often works in San Ysidro, but he and Manuela would never think of living in the States, even if they could afford it. They have no desire to become Americans—they just want a little piece of America's wealth.

About three hours before dark, people start assembling on the soccer field, arriving singly or in pairs, in family groups or in loose-knit associations formed on the road. There are always more men than women. Sometimes there are children—infants, toddlers, newborns in pink and blue blankets, nursing at a mother's breast. Almost everyone is neatly dressed, and those who aren't spruce themselves up by buying shirts and trousers from two women who have piles of clothing heaped on folding tables. Many of the migrants have crossed the border before. They speak a bit of English, have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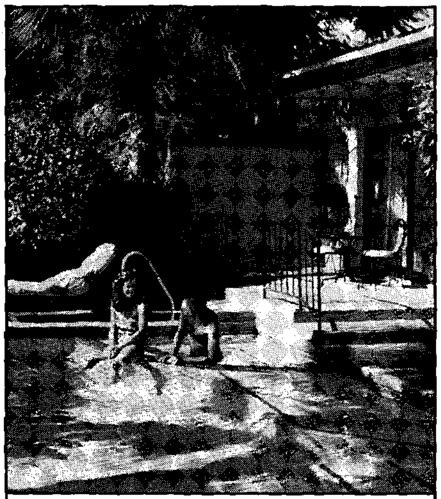

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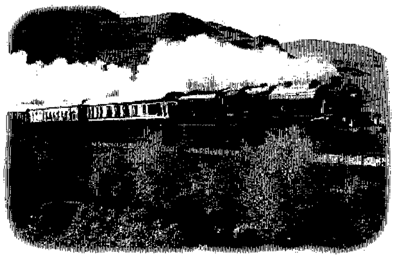

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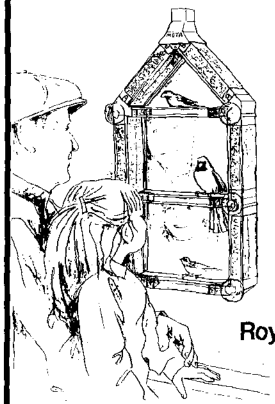
the confident air of seasoned travellers, and impart tips to the less experienced. The younger men may have their hair cut in the slick, youth-gang style of East L.A.—flat on the top and long at the sides, or clipped close to the skull with a tiny pigtail at the back. Hip young women have tight pants and spiral perms, and may be wearing heels and makeup.

In the crowd, too, there will be a few criminals, who are concealing small packets of cocaine or black-tar heroin on their persons. (Large shipments of drugs go through the port of entry in trucks—hidden, say, in a load of sawdust or broken glass.) The criminals may have knives strapped to their legs, or revolvers tucked into the waistbands of their trousers, but in spite of their presence the atmosphere in the canyon is casual. Children kick balls around and play tag while adults eat tacos and sometimes polish off shots of tequila at a tequila vender's stand. Roosters crow, and chickens scratch at the dirt. Snippets of recorded music may filter out from a shack above—accordions, drums, guitars, trumpets. The feeling in the canyon is communal, much like that at a county fair, with crossing the border the ultimate game of chance.

The only people who appear to be anxious are the Central Americans. They have already crossed the border *into* Mexico illegally, and they are fearful that the Mexican border patrol may sweep through La Libertad and toss them into a Tijuana jail, where they are often beaten up before being sent home. The Central Americans are also tired and are probably suffering from some minor illness. They have travelled a great distance to reach the soccer field (in many instances, more than two thousand miles, through jungles, swamps, and highlands), escaping sometimes from war and oppression but more frequently from outmoded agricultural practices that have stripped their homelands bare and made subsistence farming impossible. Nicaraguans, Guatemalans, Salvadorans, Hondurans—they worry that someone is out to harm them, while they simultaneously cast about, in a shy way, for help.

Because of their uncertainty, Central Americans generally employ a *coyote*. They pay between five hundred and seven hundred dollars to be smuggled into the United States, whereas a Mexican seldom pays more than three hundred dollars. The money is paid half in

Why are Cardinals red, Grandpa?



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advance and half on completion of the journey, so that the customers will have a slight measure of control over their guides, whose unscrupulousness is legendary. *Coyotes* will lead a migrant across, store him in a safe house, and then refuse to release him until his relatives in the United States cough up a ransom. This could be construed as kidnapping, but *coyotes* think of themselves as above the law. In their book of etiquette, the health and safety of their *pollitos*, or chicks, comes last. They'll desert them under pressure from the Border Patrol, perhaps leaving them locked inside a van, where, sick from the stench of sweat and urine, the chicks run the risk of suffocation. In the hierarchy of illegal immigration, *coyotes* occupy an odd niche between the vaguely heroic and the decidedly villainous, and this gives them a mythic stature on which they capitalize, outfitting themselves in fancy sweatshirts and high-top sneakers in the Air Jordan mode.

As an alternative to hiring a *coyote*, it is possible to latch onto a border veteran who'll take pity on you and let you tag along, charging a reasonable fee. One afternoon at La Libertad, I met a young Mexican man, Omar, who regularly makes a little ready cash this way. He was about to return to the United States with five new friends, having completed a girl-chasing expedition to Tijuana. At the age of twenty-one, Omar knew the border intimately. He had crossed it for the first time at fourteen, going to Yakima, Washington, to join his parents, who worked the orchards there. He had hoped for a factory job, but he wound up picking apples, and he was still picking them every summer. In his Hard Rock Café sweatshirt, sipping from a cold Tecate, he looked supremely undaunted by the mission ahead and might have been preparing himself for a trip to the corner store. His car was parked on a street in San Ysidro. It had California plates, and so, he felt, was not likely to be stopped by inquisitive agents.

The route Omar planned to follow zigzagged up and down hills, traversing rough country that offered ideal habitat for scorpions, lizards, tarantulas, and rattlesnakes. If you hiked it by day, it wasn't too intimidating, Omar said, but after dark you could get lost, or take a fall, or trip on a root or over a boulder and sprain your ankle. On

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summer nights, the heat could be horrendous, and people became dehydrated and suffered from exhaustion. There were also bandits who ambushed migrants, knocking them over the head with a stick and stealing their grubstake. (Illegal aliens often have lots of money with them, since they deal strictly in cash.) If the Border Patrol wasn't out in force, it took about half an hour to reach San Ysidro, but if agents were in the canyon you could get pinned down for a long time, cur[illegible] under a bush in a fetal ball. This didn't happen much, though, because the canyon was hard duty, and agents preferred to avoid it if they could.

For people who don't have the stamina for such a crossing, there are places on the border where success depends on other factors—cunning, bravado, even speed of foot. To cross from the Tijuana River levee, for example, an alien needs only good timing and a little luck. San Ysidro is about five hundred yards away, and though the Border Patrol tries to clog the buffer zone with agents in jeeps and on all-terrain motorcycles, the men can't grab everyone running past. Instead, it's a matter of random selection. At the levee, illegal immigration has the look of a futuristic sporting event that might have been dreamed up for a cable TV network. Many Tijuanans drop by just to entertain themselves and be part of the scene. There is always a hint of danger, mainly because of all the drug dealers and junkies. Teen-agers in heavy-metal T-shirts, high from sniffing glue, strut around listening to old Led Zep tapes on their boom boxes, and every now and then one of them takes off for the States in a goofy glide.

If you walk west from the levee for about a mile, you come to a wooded hillside where migrants also meet. It is a much more tranquil place, except on chilly evenings, when people uproot and burn the surrounding vegetation to keep warm. Technically, they're on American soil when they do this, having crawled through holes in the border fence, but if agents make a move toward them they jump back into Mexico. A fellow called Miguel told me this one evening while he was eating his dinner, a ham sandwich he'd bought from a vender. The vender, too, was talkative. He reminisced about his years in Santa Ana, California, where he had worked in construction until he got strung out on cocaine. His life was much simpler now, he said. Some weeks, he made as much as seventy dollars selling his wares on and around the levee, keeping the sandwiches and drinks in an Igloo cooler that his wife toted around, even though she was pregnant and had already suffered two miscarriages.

Miguel was slender and sensitive. He had a gap between his front teeth, and he fretted that, at thirty-seven, he was beginning to lose his looks. A roofer [illegible] trade, he had hooked up with two Guatemalans from Cobán, first-timers, and was taking them across, planning to leave that night at eleven o'clock, when the Border Patrol changed shifts and everyone was distracted. Miguel spoke English with a German accent. An American Army colonel from Wisconsin—an archeology buff who'd stopped in Miguel's village to study the ruins—had taught it to him long ago. The colonel had urged Miguel to visit him in the Midwest, but Miguel was too busy exploring the United States, living in Los Angeles, Palmdale, Chicago, Phoenix, Tucson, and Houston. He had been caught only once, in New Orleans. It was his dream, he said, to make it to San Francisco someday.

In Canyon Zapata, there are usually about a hundred people on the soccer field at twilight. This is the time when Manuela begins to put away her supplies and utensils. She is concerned that somebody might try to rob her, and often she lingers at her table until one of her brothers comes to escort her out. While she douses her fire and scrapes her grill, the *coyotes* brief their customers, sketching maps on the ground and sending scouts to check on the whereabouts of agents. As night approaches, people move tentatively forward—ten steps, a pause, then ten more steps. They move as if they were inching themselves into a body of water. In [illegible] few minutes, they will have vanished from sight, and Manuela will be back in her house, cooking dinner for her family. The next day will be the same for her. Every day is the same for Manuela—except Sunday, when she observes the Sabbath by staying at home and attending to her Bible studies.

ONE of the busiest Border Patrol stations in the San Diego Sector has been Brown Field, on Otay Mesa. Named for an airport nearby, the station is plain and resembles a small-town firehouse in need of paint and refurbishing. The agents assigned to Brown Field frequently have the demeanor of firemen, in fact, because their work is routine, with long, dull periods during which they perform a repetitive chore—apprehending illegal aliens and returning them to Mexico. Their ranks are composed of Army vets, former cops, wanna-be cops, and many ordinary guys who are athletic, don't mind wearing a uniform, and enjoy working outdoors. When agents complain, it isn't about government policy but, rather, about how badly they're paid and how their wives must struggle to make ends meet. Boredom is their worst enemy, and sometimes they combat it by competing to see who can bring in the most aliens in a day, a week, or a month.

From Brown Field Station an agent can look across a highway to the part of Otay Mesa that drops off to the southwest, toward Tijuana. The mesa is huge, and most of it is still raw desert, but it won't be for long. Its history follows a common pattern of land and water grabs in Southern California, where the model for real-estate transactions appears to be the deal that John Huston pulled off in "Chinatown"—diverting the rivers of the West to L.A. Just before the turn of the century, the mesa had a saloon and a racetrack, but they died a natural death, and some settlers from Germany began dry-farming barley. Irrigation water became available in the Otay area around 1950, and the farmers diversified and put in vegetable crops and citrus orchards, like those in Imperial Valley, to the north. They couldn't beat the prices of Mexican growers, though, and the mesa languished until the late nineteen-sixties, when a combine of speculators bought up property very cheap and then lobbied to have the local zoning changed from agricultural to industrial and commercial.

The obvious appeal of the mesa was its strategic position, directly across the border from what American business interests have always liked to refer to as Mexico's "inexhaustible pool of cheap labor." It was such thinking that helped to create an agreement in 1942 that, as a war-emergency measure, allowed farm workers to enter the States legally, so they could harvest crops that might otherwise have rotted in the fields. The agreement saved California farmers from terrible losses, but it also had the effect of reinforcing a notion already prevalent among rural Mexicans that there would always be work up north. (So many Mexicans came in as braceros that in 1954 the government, in an initiative called Operation Wetback, ordered them to leave the country or face being deported. According to government records, more than a million illegal Mexicans left, but who can say how many sneaked right back in?) California agriculture still depends on "cheap labor," and so do the *maquiladoras* springing up on Otay Mesa—one plant in Tijuana, for tedious piecework, and one in the United States, for the final assembly of products, and for corporate offices.

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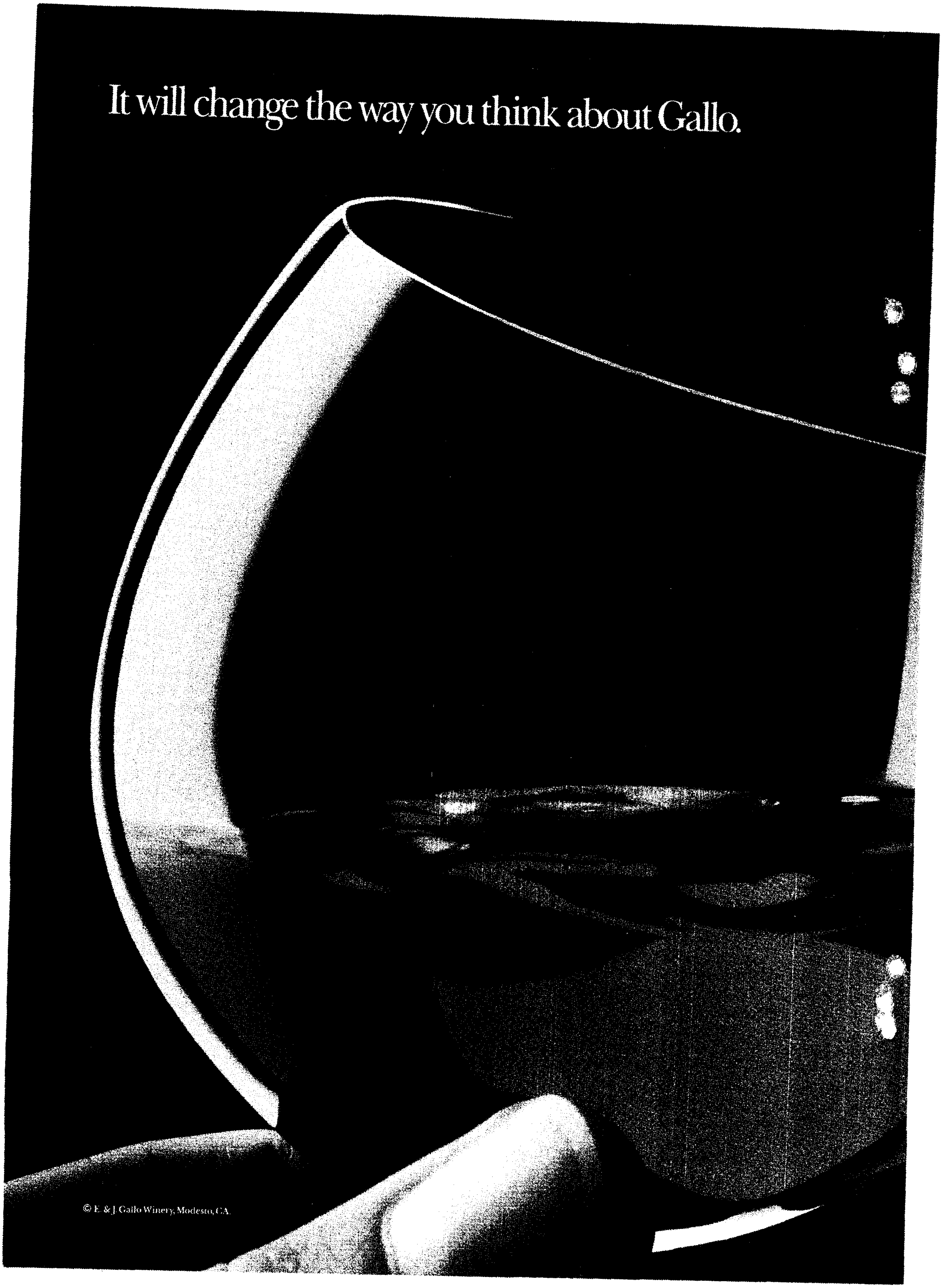
Among corporations that operate *maquiladoras*, the underlying assumption is that poor Mexicans will be delighted with humdrum jobs that pay them a fraction of what an American worker would earn for doing the same thing, but this hasn't proved to be true. The turnover rate at most plants is very high, and so is the rate of absenteeism, with employees often going home for the weekend and not returning until the following Wednesday. Industry journals address these problems in an oblique way, suggesting, for instance, that "task oriented" Americans have trouble understanding "relationship oriented" Hispanics, but it is more usual for the advice columns to provide cross-cultural tips, such as when to give a co-worker *el abrazo*, the friendly Latin hug—on holidays, of course, but also at funerals and at "any other moment of happiness or sadness." The journals are not as forthcoming about the environmental impact of *maquiladoras*, although *Twin Plant News* did report in a recent issue that American corporations had been caught dumping about half a million tons of toxic waste at "clandestine 'toxic cemeteries' " all along the border.

It can be instructive to visit both sides of Otay Mesa. On the American side, you see bright new industrial parks bearing triumphant corporate logos—Sony, Sanyo, Hughes Air-



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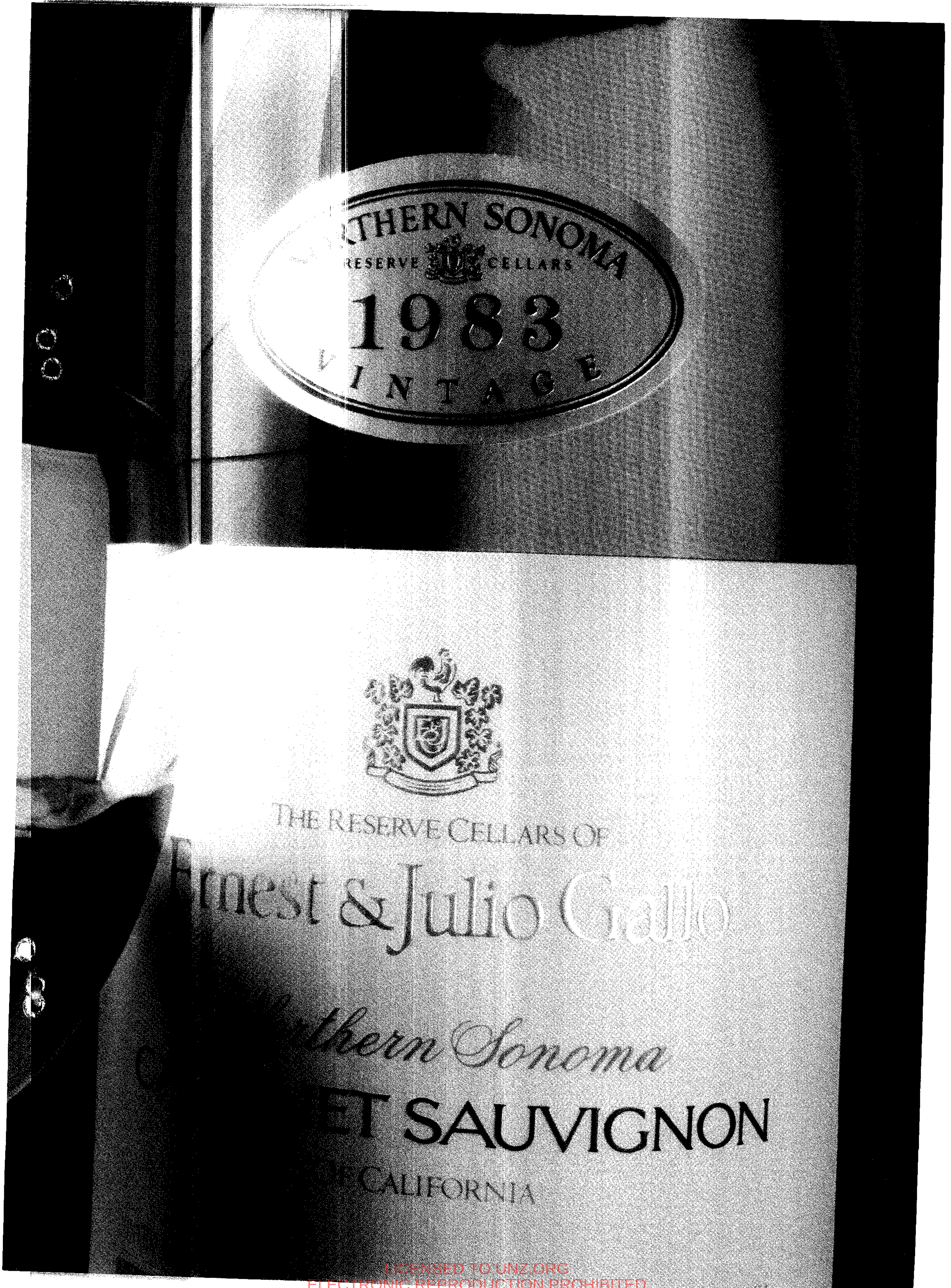
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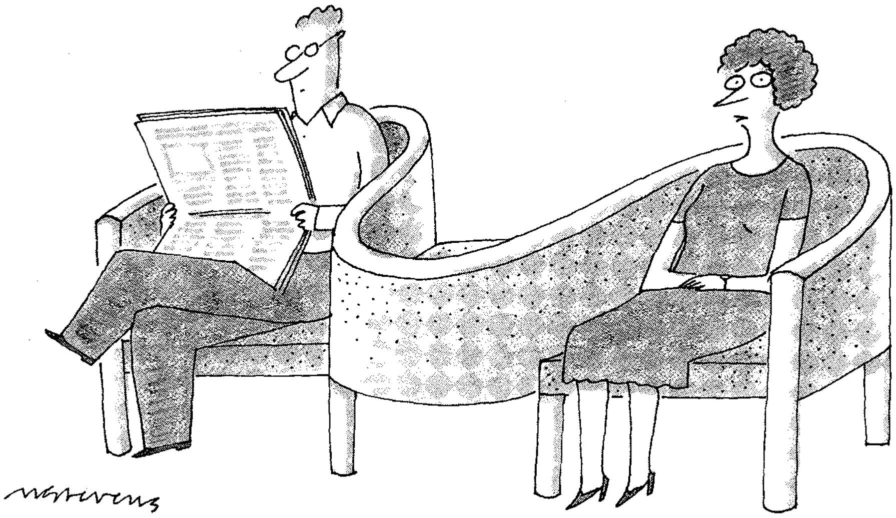


"Is there someone else, Howard?"

craft. The Golden Arches are in place. Truckloads of desert-hardy trees and shrubs go by, destined to form the instant landscaping on Maquiladora Street or Pacific Rim Boulevard. Everything's clean. Drive through the Otay Mesa port of entry, and you're in another world. (The port, which opened in 1985, purportedly to ease the traffic at San Ysidro, has been a tremendous boon to development.) The buildings in the Zona Industrial are drab, the roads are miserably paved, and the air reeks of chemicals and diesel fumes. Most *maquila* workers are young women from the interior, and on their lunch break they leave the plants to eat at carts and flirt with men. This appears to be a moment of happiness, but it fades as soon as the women, whose wages, of fifty dollars a week, barely cover their housing and transportation costs, must go back inside.

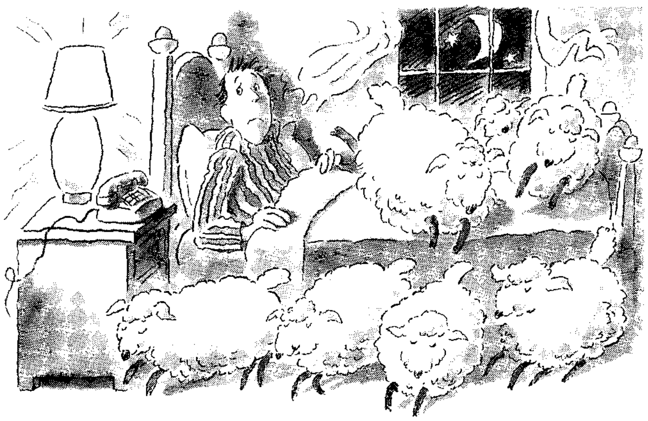
The *maquiladoras* pose no difficulties for the Border Patrol. They have stringent hiring policies, and almost all the employees live in and around Tijuana. At Brown Field Station, the foremost duty of agents remains the capture of aliens sneaking across the mesa at night. They use a variety of high-tech gear to assist them, and it adds a considerable amount of money to the annual budget of the I.N.S. There are electronic sensors buried on the border, and whenever anybody passes by one a blip flashes on a computer screen at headquarters. There is an infrared telescope that rests on a pickup truck, and it is deployed at a different spot each night, somewhere between San Ysidro and the mesa. When you look through it, you can pick out people moving in the dark. They're an eerie green against the dull-red glow of fields and earth. The agent manning the scope pinpoints the location of migrants on a grid and relays it, and then a copter may be called in to throw a search beam on the spot.

In spite of the high-tech equipment, most Border Patrol tracking is done on foot or in a vehicle, often a Chevy Blazer painted a sort of grayish camouflage color. The Blazers are sometimes so dented that they look as if they'd been driven off a cliff, and some of them actually have been, because agents seldom pursue migrants over established roads. Instead, they have to motor through mud, marshes, sand, and loose gravel. As for the mesa, it is as hard as a cast-iron skillet, even after a rain, and a ride across it at top speed is a serious challenge to the human spine. The shock absorbers in most of the Border Partrol's vehicles are ancient, and you bounce around so vigorously that you may bang your head on the roof. Agents also sustain injuries while they're running, jumping fences, and wrestling with aliens. *Coyotes* do them damage by pitching rocks and chunks of concrete at them from fleeing vans. One agent got hit in an ear and went deaf. Another agent took such a solid crack to his forehead that it exposed the frontal lobe of his brain.

These "rockings" are a major nuisance. In the San Diego Sector, the Border Patrol spends about forty thousand dollars a year replacing its vehicles' windshields and side windows. At the same time, however, agents are spared other types of violence, which is a bit strange, given the potentially explosive climate on the border. There are theories to explain this. One theory has it that most illegal aliens are simple folk, who wouldn't know which end of a weapon to hold if you stuck it in their hands. Another theory has it that the criminals who do have weapons control their impulse toward violence, because they don't want to incur the wrath of the United States government and upset the subtle balances of a system that works so beautifully to their advantage.

JOE NUNEZ is assigned to Brown Field Station, and in his eleven years as an agent he has been involved in only one threatening incident—when a migrant pulled a knife and tried to stab Nunez' partner. Nunez gets excited when he tells about battling for the knife (which, it turned out, was made of wood), but he is really an easygoing type, who likes a beer and a barbecue and doesn't let himself become hung up on the most salient metaphysical issue of this job—that is, whether or not the chaos at the border is intentional. Sometimes it troubles him that the job isn't more stimulating, and he thinks about transferring to an investigative unit in L.A., because the thrills at Brown Field are few and far between. Nunez caught some Chinese illegals once, and once he caught some Yugoslavs, but then O.T.M.s. (illegal aliens who are Other Than Mexican) are common in the San Diego Sector: in fiscal year 1988, its agents arrested (among others) three hundred and forty-seven Colombians, two hundred and sixty-six Brazilians, fifty-three South Koreans, twenty Indians, sixteen Turks, eleven Filipinos, seven Canadians, three Israelis, and one person apiece from Nigeria, Somalia, Gambia, Algeria, and France.

One night, when the moon was almost full, Nunez let me ride with him on patrol. Only minutes after we left the station, he noticed five people at the edge of the highway, moving stealthily forward. He shut off the Blazer's headlights, downshifted into first, and crept up on them. They were so preoccupied



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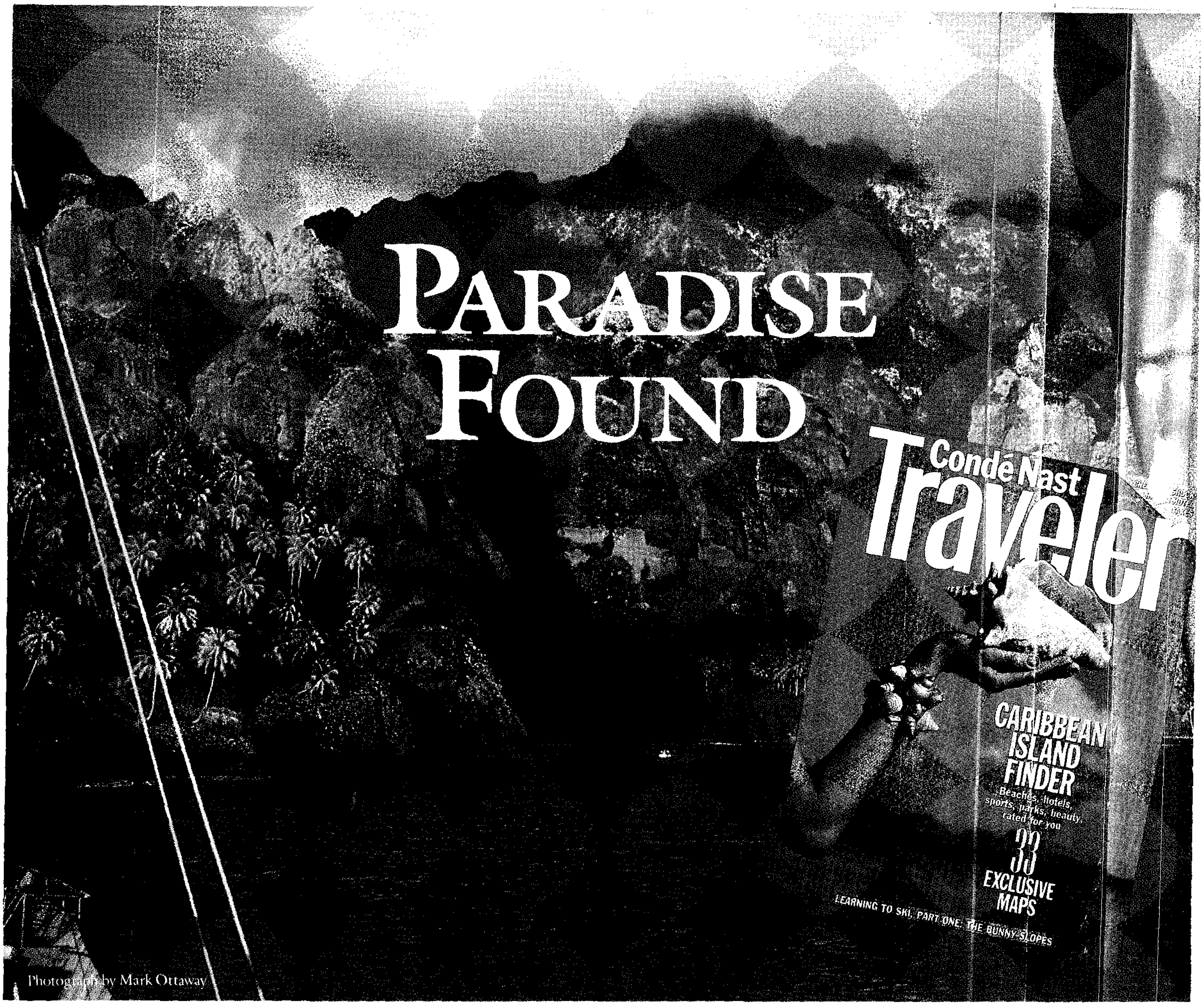
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with the speeding cars and the unfamiliar turf that they didn't see him until he was about ten yards away. Then one of them shouted, and they all spun on their heels and ran, but when Nunez ordered them to halt they complied, slumping to their knees and putting their hands on their heads, as if they had practiced for the drill. There were three migrant men, a migrant woman, and a *coyote*, all in their early twenties. Nunez called for a Border Patrol van to collect them. Then he frisked everyone and found a handkerchief tied to one man's leg, hidden under his trousers. The man reacted as if the handkerchief held precious gems. In it were ten crumpled dollar bills.

The mood of the aliens was sombre. They seemed to be kicking themselves for getting caught. When hundreds were crossing the mesa, why had fate selected them to be pulled aside? Nunez made small talk with them, speaking in Spanish. This was always an awkward time—the dead time before a van arrived—and during it all pretense fell away, and the weirdness of the situation became manifest. Some agents joked about it, while others scolded their captives for breaking the law. Some agents knew what it was like to be poor and so were sympathetic, while others concealed their emotions behind the symbols of office. There were agents who were inquisitive, and there were agents who were rude and made racist remarks. As for Nunez, he was gentle, polite, and perhaps a bit embarrassed, since everybody knew that the arrest was just a momentary hitch—an inconvenience on the order of a traffic ticket—in a journey that would soon continue.

"Where are you from?" Nunez asked.

The oldest-looking man answered. He kept glancing menacingly at the *coyote*, as if he wanted to strangle him. "Oaxaca," he said. Oaxaca is home to Mixtec and Zapotec Indians. It is sixteen hundred miles to the south, and its hills are so eroded that a corn crop, which has always been a staple of the Indians, can scarcely be grown there anymore.

"Why are you crossing?"

The man shrugged. "To work," he said.

Trabajar—to work. All night, whenever Nunez asked "Why are you crossing?" the word was repeated. People wanted to work, and they didn't

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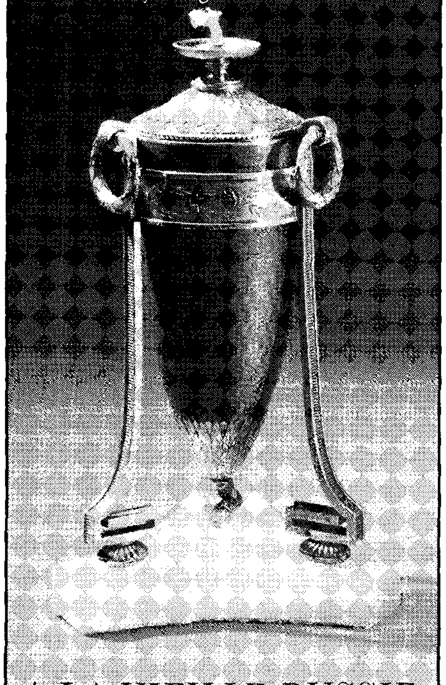

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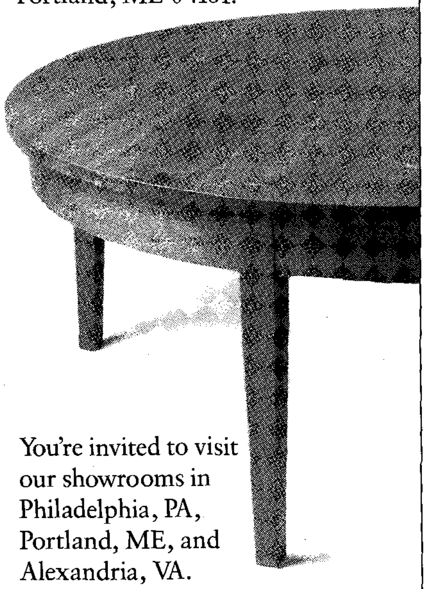

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care what the work was like. They would do stoop labor, wrecking their backs and their knees picking strawberries or artichokes, and they would prune vineyards and orchards that had been sprayed with pesticides. They would swab floors, bathe infants, scrub pots and pans, and breathe in formaldehyde vapors in factories where particleboard was made. They would sell bags of oranges from traffic islands in Santa Monica, and they would hammer dents from bumpers at auto-body shops in Glendale. Contractors would employ them to dig ditches for foundations. They would agree to remove asbestos from around heating ducts and to scrape lead-based paint from walls. They would pour hot tar for roofs, handle beakers in methamphetamine labs, mow lawns, deliver circulars, clean sewers—anything at all.

The van came, and the Oaxacans climbed into it. They'd have to ride around in it until it was filled to capacity—about seventeen passengers—and then they would be processed at Brown Field Station. They could be detained for a maximum of seventy-two hours, although it was probable that they would be gone before morning. For a while after arresting them, Nunez had no luck. He spotted only "onesies" and "twosies," and because they were far away he didn't bother to go after them. He did chase four men down a hill, but they "bushed up" on him, vanishing into the mesquite scrub. Then he spent fifteen minutes tailing a suspicious car and keeping in contact with a fellow-agent, who finally stopped the driver and reported that he was "a Japanese gentleman with a valid passport."

And then Nunez was distracted. Somebody was walking toward him at a brisk clip, reversing the usual order of things. The man approached the Blazer, took off his knit cap, and grinned broadly, as if he'd bumped into an old pal. When Nunez asked for his documents, he fumbled in a pocket, then struck himself in the forehead with the palm of a hand—*ay, caramba!*—and said that he had left them at his uncle's house in San Ysidro. The story delighted him out of all proportion to its merits. It was clear that he'd been drinking. Drunks were always wandering across the mesa, often just because another drunk in a *pulque* shop had dared them to, and they wasted everyone's time. The man tried a few more excuses, but he could not invent one that pleased Nunez, and at last he collapsed into a rueful posture of acceptance and sat down to wait for a van.

The night dragged on. There were more arrests, but they were ordinary. Then, at about eleven o'clock, Nunez received a call on his radio informing him that a big bunch of Salvadorans, as many as twenty of them, were being rounded up. This made him sigh. Central Americans required a lot of paperwork, and he'd have to put in about forty-five minutes with each of them. His shift would stretch into the wee hours. The Salvadorans would all ask for political asylum, whether or not they were genuine refugees, and by the time a court date was set they would be working somewhere—and if they weren't working they wouldn't show up in court. Such job-related frustrations subject agents to constant stress and cause some of them to burn out. Some have marital problems, some have problems with booze, and some, who lack Nunez' equanimity, get headaches from patrolling the mesa in the dark and realizing that they often have no idea where Mexico ends and California begins.

IN the last ten years, more and more Oaxacans have crossed into San Diego County, leaving behind one of the poorest and most fractious states in Mexico. There are five hundred and seventy villages in Oaxaca, all of which date from the pre-Conquest period, and all of which have remained fiercely independent. The villages have their own rules and laws, which take precedence over the country's civil codes. And sometimes an extended family within a village will have its own subset of rules and laws, which contradict all the other rules and laws. Disputes are part of everyday life in Oaxaca. Some of them have been raging since the time of Cortés. They center on communal land rights, and lead to altercations, fistfights, and small-scale battles. Tradition matters deeply to Mixtecs and Zapotecs, and, in the face of grinding poverty, it is becoming traditional for the men of both tribes to look for work on American farms where their friends and relatives have worked in the past.

The farms around San Diego are disappearing rapidly, though, and the men often arrive at their destination and find condominiums where the beans and tomatoes used to be. Yet some farms with a history of hiring Oaxacans are still around, such as the one in Carlsbad, where some Mixtecs work. It is a big spread, surrounded by suburban developments, and it has a hundred acres planted with strawberries. The Mixtecs earn three dollars and sixty-five cents an hour to hoe the fields and to harvest the fruit, but there isn't always something for them to do, and they may have a week or two of inactivity. They aren't as disconcerted by this as Americans might be, since they're accustomed to hardship and know how to make it through a slack period. They behave as they might in their home village, staying close to camp and using their free time to relax, playing cards for pennies and nickels or conversing in the sunshine.

The Mixtecs live in camps out of economic necessity, fear, and ignorance, and also for the comfort of being near their own people. The apartment rents in Carlsbad are way beyond their reach, and, besides, the Mixtecs are saving money to take back to Oaxaca. If they have any English at all, it will be limited to "yes" and "no" and "O.K.," and when they go out in the streets they frequently get confused and are afraid to—or don't know how to—ask questions. Many of them have documents, but they are still uneasy, and believe that they might be deported at any moment. They never bank any of the cash they make, storing it instead in their underwear or in their bedrolls or in the baseball caps they love to wear. Thieves descend on them sometimes, including youth-gang members looking for a score. The growers in the county use private security forces to patrol their farms and keep out trespassers, and the guards are responsible for protecting the workers, too, whether or not the workers have asked for protection.

The Mixtec camp in Carlsbad is home to about sixty men. It is built in a dry creekbed below the fenced strawberry fields, in a grove of oaks, bay laurels, and pungent eucalyptus trees. The men live in shacks made of scavenged lumber and cardboard. Some of the shacks have been around for a decade. The Mixtecs are short, but they can seldom enter the doorway of one of their shacks without bending over. If a man in camp has a mattress, he is doing well. A man with a mattress, a chair, some bedding, and a framed religious picture might be considered rich. There are no toilets available, and no electricity or running water, so trash and excrement lie about, despite the Mixtecs' attempts to be tidy. They buy most of their groceries from a quilt truck they call a *fayuca*, or a "roach wagon," paying too much for canned goods and worrying that they'll get sick because they're not eating fresh vegetables. For sundries, they go to a woman, Doña Elvira, who keeps a shop in a tract house up the road. She lets Mixtecs use her telephone in an emergency. At night, they sit outdoors on her patio and watch programs on a black-and-white TV.

For most of the year, the Mixtecs don't mind the camp, but when winter comes they suffer mightily. They have kerosene lanterns and candles to light their shacks, but are constantly knocking them over and starting fires. Sometimes they try to heat a shack with charcoal briquettes, or with kindling. They stuff magazines and newspapers into the walls for insulation, much as people do at La Libertad, holding the

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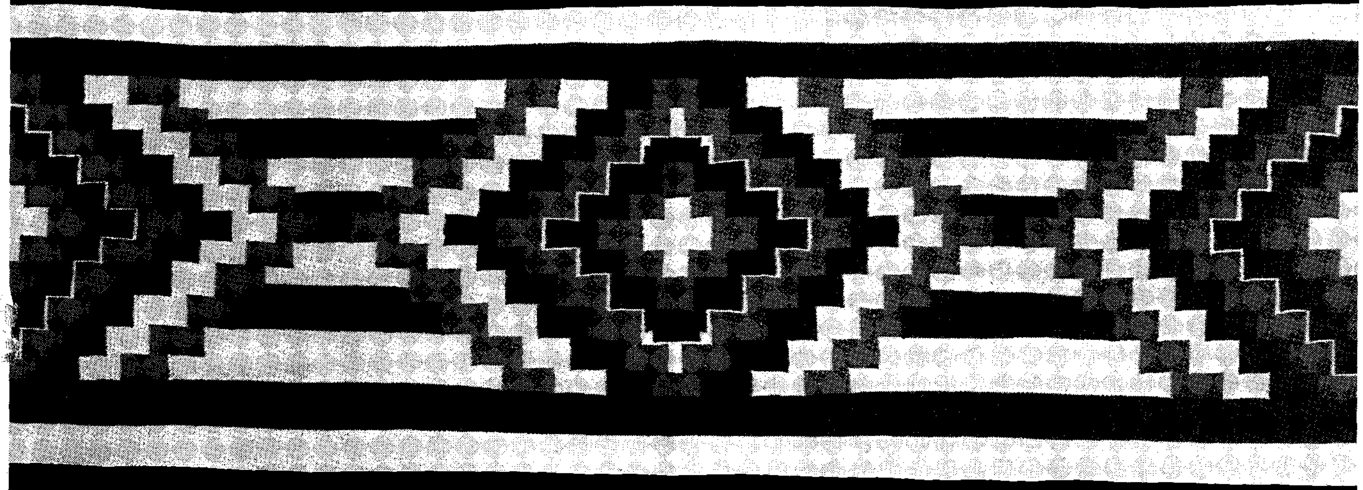

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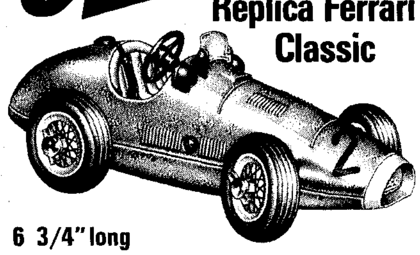

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material in place with thumbtacks or chicken wire. On the day I visited the camp, I saw a United States government publication for immigrants that was jammed between some plastic and some cardboard, with the pages turned to a paragraph that began, "The United States has fifty states. Rhode Island is the smallest state." A Mixtec was standing nearby, and when I asked him, in English, about Rhode Island, he nodded, smiled, and said, "Yes, O.K."

My guide at the camp was Roberto Martinez, the regional director of the American Friends Service Committee, whose offices are located in San Diego's Logan Heights barrio, around the corner from some safe houses. For the last few years, Martinez has involved himself in the lives of migrants, both legal and illegal, and has been keeping a record of various abuses committed against them by the Border Patrol, the San Diego police, and vigilantes. There are dozens of migrant camps in the county, and Martinez knows them all and drops by them on a regular basis to hand out donated blankets, sweaters, and food. He likes this aspect of his job, because it gets him out into the fresh air. In his opinion, the Mixtecs' camp isn't a particularly bad one. At other camps, men live in "spider holes," digging a pit and then covering the top with leaves and branches. The Border Patrol rarely raids any camps, and neither do any of the county agencies that might be expected to care about them. Martinez isn't sure why this is so.

The Mixtecs were taking it easy the morning I was there. They'd just finished planting some strawberries and now had to wait for the weeds to grow. They were doing their laundry in buckets of water carried down from Doña Elvira's, and hanging the wash on tree limbs to dry. They had a rusty basketball hoop nailed to a tree, but they couldn't play, because their ball was punctured and flat. The Mixtecs ranged in age from about sixteen to about sixty, and they had inky hair and were dressed in very clean clothes, given the circumstances of their lives. They seemed to have only two emotions—extreme pleasure or extreme misery. They smiled in such an open, unaffected, and generous way that they appeared to be in on all the cosmic secrets, but, I gathered, they're also capable of falling into a vicious funk and committing acts of mayhem, espe-

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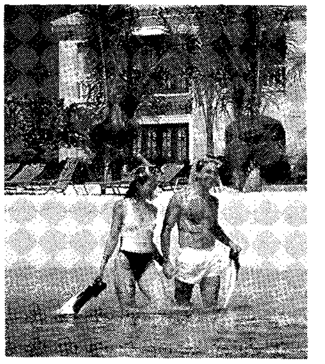

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cially if they've been drinking. There was no alcohol in the camp. There were no women, either, but prostitutes have been known to pay calls. All the men wore cheap digital watches, and nine out of ten wore baseball caps that said, across the crown, such things as "SWAT" and "OLD FART" and "CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL."

Martinez asked the men if they were all from the same Oaxacan village, and they nodded and said, "*Sí, mismo pueblo.*" Then he asked if they had papers. They nodded again, but not with as much enthusiasm, and a couple of them remembered chores they had to do, and vanished into shacks.

It was Martinez' guess that about three-quarters of the men were in the country legally. Since Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), in 1986, there have been more documented workers in the States than ever before, and at least seventy-five per cent of the workers at any farm will be legal—although at harvesttime everyone works, papers or no papers. (In businesses other than agriculture, the rate of compliance is much lower.) IRCA hasn't been an unqualified success, however. Some employers use it as a tool for discriminating against aliens: they refuse to hire Hispanic applicants by claiming that their documents look fake. Or an employer may hire somebody whose papers are clearly forged, let him work for two weeks, and call in the Border Patrol on the fourteenth of the month, the day before payday. And there are many crooked lawyers who bilk migrants, charging them five hundred dollars to fill out forms that require only a birth date, a signature, and the remittance of a ten-dollar bill.

In many respects, the most ticklish consequence of IRCA is that it has made a previously invisible phenomenon visible. There have always been plenty of migrant workers in San Diego County, but they have tended to be undocumented and to stay in hiding. A man with papers feels free to roam about, so you now see a lot more migrants on the streets. Even the Mixtecs venture into Carlsbad if they run low on money. They walk a few miles to a 7-11 and stand in front of it, waving at motorists, in the hope that someone will offer them a day job raking leaves or painting a house. If nothing happens by noon or so, they lose their ambition and may lounge around for the rest of the afternoon, as if they were in the *zócalo* in Oaxaca. They sit on curbs or lean against cars and tease each other, and when a pretty woman goes by they lift their eyes and comment appreciatively. If they get sleepy, they take a nap. If they have to urinate, they step behind a bush. It doesn't occur to most of them that they might be causing offense, or that their very presence might be frightening shoppers away from stores.

These groups of documented migrants can be found in any city in Southern California. A few illegal aliens will be mixed in with them, but only a few, and they aren't identifiable at a glance. The men often segregate themselves by nationality—the Guatemalans on one side of a block and Nicaraguans on the other. Mexicans draw very fine distinctions—Jaliscans, say, here and Zacatecans there. The groups can be big—up to three hundred—and also rambunctious, and as their size increases so does the volume of the protests against them. In bedroom communities, irate residents phone the Border Patrol and insist that the for-

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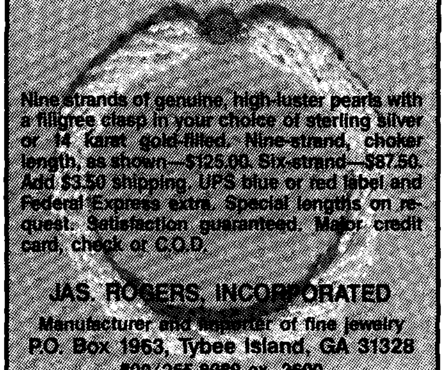

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eigners be removed. That puts the Border Patrol in a sort of double bind, which the agents recognize but, as public servants, are compelled not to mention; that is, the migrants wouldn't be standing on corners if some people in Vista and Oceanside and Carlsbad and Encinitas weren't hiring them and paying them—in cash, off the books and way below union scale, and without deducting any taxes for Uncle Sam. So the agents explain to callers that the men, though demonstrably foreign, are only exercising their right to assemble.

In the old days, the Border Patrol ran sweeps to deal with such complaints. Agents came by in a van, grabbed all the Hispanics in sight, and sifted through them later at the station, extending apologies to the few legally documented aliens who happened to crop up among the illegals. They can't do that anymore. An apology is no longer acceptable, and a wrongful arrest brings charges of harassment and may result in a civil-rights suit. Agents in a suburb like El Cajon, northeast of San Diego, must be very cautious about whom they arrest, and how the arrest is conducted, even though they're under pressure from citizens to be more forceful. Throughout the county, there has been a subtle change in the way Mexicans and Central Americans are perceived. Formerly, when an agent was observed hauling in a migrant he might be met with disapproving glances, as if he were bullying a poor person just trying to survive. Now an *apprehension* outside a convenience store or a pizza parlor is likely to be greeted by applause.

At the El Cajon Station, agents are concerned about a rise in acts of discrimination, and even violence, against migrant workers. They believe that a backlash has set in. This backlash takes many forms, some open and some covert. It can have an absurdist streak, as it does at Fairbanks Ranch, a wealthy subdivision, where D. Wayne Lukas, the horse trainer, stables some thoroughbreds, and where you can buy a midsized mansion on Alydar Court for a million five. Workers loiter by the ranch gates, looking to trim hedges or shovel manure, and periodically some neighborhood matrons give them litter bags of their own, so they won't throw their trash on the grass. Or it can be mean-spirited and life-threatening, as it was at the Carlsbad Country Store, where, two years ago, a butcher and a

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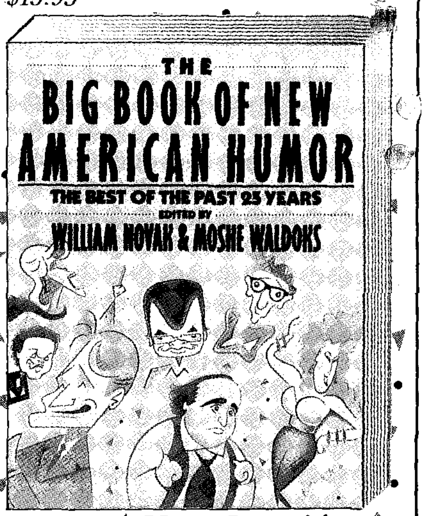
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baker kidnapped a loitering Mexican, bound him with tape, put a paper bag over his head, and left him in a field. The kidnappers' claim that they were making a citizen's arrest for trespassing did not hold up in court.

For people who know San Diego County, the backlash doesn't come as a surprise. The county is conservative, affluent, and Republican, and the city of San Diego, in particular, has always had a reputation for being tough on Hispanics, even those who were born in the United States. Hispanics constitute nearly twenty per cent of the city's population, but they have never had an elected representative on the City Council, because of the way the districts are gerrymandered. San Diego still depends on the military to bolster its economy, and it is still full of men in G.I. crewcuts who can scan the bay with binocs and tell the CG-47 Aegis guided-missile cruiser from the DD-965 guided-missile destroyer. In San Diego, the nineteen-fifties—an era of golf, highballs, and global dominance—remains a cultural beacon.

Organizations have been formed in San Diego to address the problems at the border. They go by such names as Alliance for Border Enforcement and Stamp Out Crime Council, and they contend that the United States is not enforcing the immigration laws on its books. They have statistics to show that illegal aliens are a drain on the county's resources. Its hospitals, its schools, its jails, and its welfare programs must all accommodate migrants, whether or not they are documented, and the expense, these organizations maintain, is debilitating. They resent the drug smuggling and the associated crime, and they're obsessed by the idea—for which there is no evidence—that terrorists are entering the country. The most militant individuals want to put troops on the border, or to build a wall or an electrified fence from San Ysidro to Otay Mesa. In an attempt to dramatize the need for greater vigilance, members of some of the organizations often drive in a caravan to San Ysidro, park on Dairy Mart Road, and aim their headlights at the Tijuana River levee, "lighting up" the border and exposing the aliens about to cross.

IN the suburb of Del Mar, in San Diego County, there is a Oaxacan camp right off a two-lane road, across from Evergreen Nursery, where most

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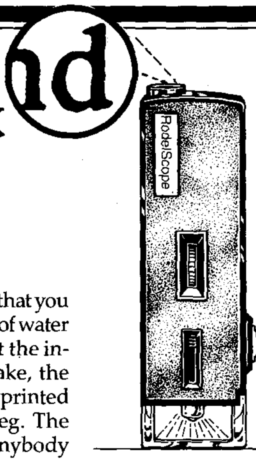
of the men work. The men here are Mixtecs—about twenty-five of them in all—but their shacks are cruder than the ones in Carlsbad, more battered and wind-pierced, filthier. The Mixtecs live on brushy land without any shade trees, and the camp smells of decaying garbage, not eucalyptus or bay laurel. In the brush you find crushed beer cans and empty wine bottles. The shacks are thick with dust, because bulldozers are levelling the earth nearby, preparing it for a new housing tract. That means that the Mixtecs will soon have to move, although no one knows where.

It is strange to stand in the camp and look over your shoulder at the bulldozers and, beyond them, the orderly lines of pink and rose-colored condominiums stretching toward the ocean. In fact, if you're tired or a little disoriented—if you've been crossing the border yourself—you can forget exactly which country you are in. At quitting time, when the Mixtecs return from work, one of them begins strumming a guitar, while a woman—the only one around—goes from shack to shack borrowing ingredients to make a *caldo de res* for her lover. Her feet are bare, and she has on a new cotton dress that clings tightly to her body. The man with the guitar sighs and wishes aloud that he had a chicken to eat, or at least some tequila to drink.

Samuel Solano shares a shack at the camp with three others from his home village, sleeping on a cheap sleeping bag that pours out cotton stuffing. He has shoulder-length hair and a full beard, and if you tell him, as a joke, that he looks like a hippie he enjoys it very much. He works only three days a week at the nursery, because he doesn't yet have documents. He has applied for them, though, and carries around a creased and dirty envelope that contains photocopies of some formal letters pertaining to his request. His wife, also a Mixtec, is across the border in Ensenada, less than a hundred miles away, with their four children, and, in season, she picks tomatoes. Samuel wants to visit his family, but he doesn't dare cross over, because he isn't sure he could get back in. The risk is too big, he says, scratching at his beard, so he plans to wait for his documents to arrive. That might happen in the new year, he thinks. Then he will go south for a while, until it's time to leave his wife and head north once again.

—BILL BARICH



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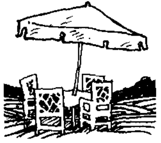

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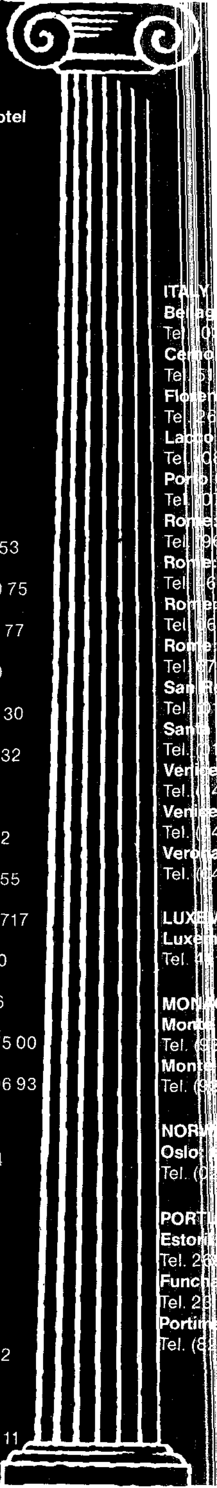

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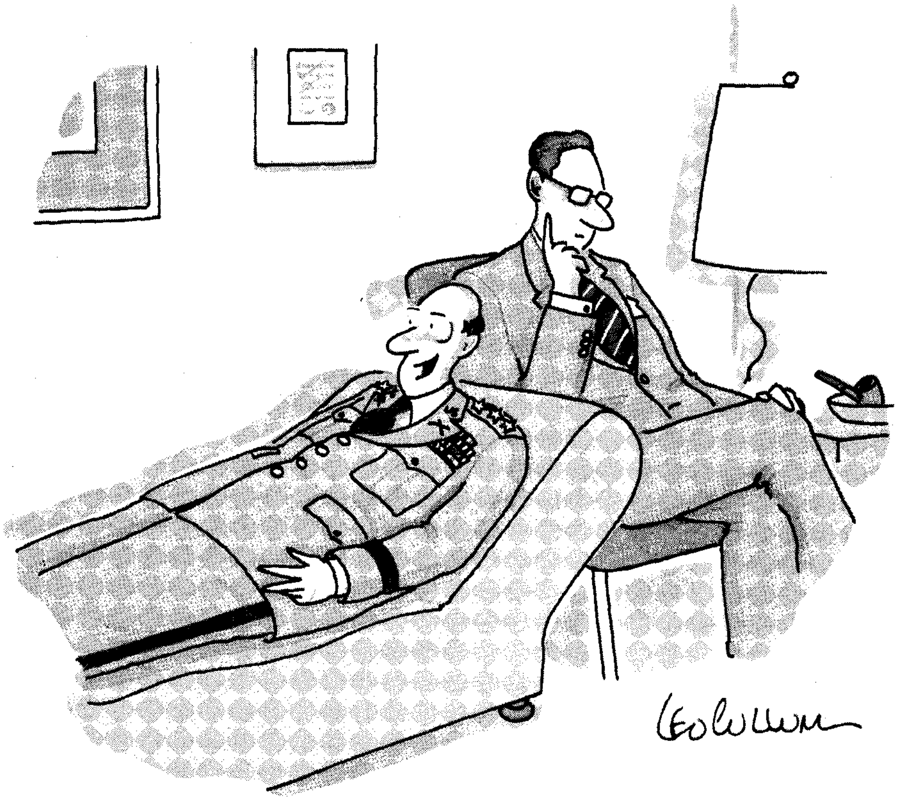
GIFTS FOR THE HOUSE

THERE'S a new book, "Mrs. Sharp's Traditions: Nostalgic Suggestions for Re-creating the Family Celebrations and Seasonal Pastimes of the Victorian Home," by Sarah Ban Breathnach (Simon & Schuster; $29.95), that's enough to make Mom throw in the towel. It is written ostensibly by a perfect Victorian mother, one Mrs. Sharp, of Takoma Park, Maryland, who addresses Dear Reader on the "simple pleasures that amused children and brought families together a hundred years ago," and has been updated by Mrs. Sharp herself for our own nineties. Mrs. Sharp promotes year-round family togetherness, and the December chapter recommends that Dear Reader "spread out the joys of Christmas over the thirty-seven days, from the first of December until January's Epiphany celebration," on the theory that it keeps the little ones quieter. Making an Advent calendar is only one of many group projects advanced by Mrs. Sharp—"Now, using a sharp pencil, draw twenty-four small square windows on the top sheet, pressing down hard to make sure you leave an outline of the windows on the gold foil. . . . " She ends with a recipe for a Twelfth Night cake. "For one long, glorious month adults and children spent extra time together sharing seasonal pastimes: the making of special foods, decorating the house, and the preparation of gifts." A hundred years later, however, the domestic arts during the Yuletide season tend to be honored more in the breach than in the observance, and Dear Reader is apt to be found combing through catalogues and launching sorties in search of the freshest tree, the perfect gift, the store-bought cookie that tastes homemade. It is to this hapless majority that we dedicate this column.

FATHER was not a main player in these olde seasonal pastimes. Father's big moment was—and still is—bringing home "the pretty German toy," as the Christmas tree was often called, and today the largest and cheapest source is underneath the West Side Highway between Canal and Chambers Streets. Decorating the pretty German toy with popcorn and cranberries is in keeping with Mrs. Sharp's ideal. That requires button-and-carpet thread, which is strong and smooth, and embroidery needles, which are fine and sharp, and both thread and needles are to be found at a five-and-ten. Or the ambitious and optimistic parent can buy some colored paper and a book such as "Origami: Paperfolding Fun" (Gallery Books; $6.98), and set everyone to work making stars and roses and swans. The book begins with folding practice and progresses to the camel (thirty-one steps). Those not up for popcorn, cranberries, and origami could decorate a tree entirely in neo-Victoriana from the Morgan Library gift shop, where there is a wide selection of ornaments, ranging from six icicles ($2.75) to a wooden lord a-leaping ($18), plus assorted flora, fauna, and aves. A more heterogeneous collection of ornaments can be found at the Christmas Cottage, 758 Madison Avenue (65th), whose owners believe in getting a jump on the competition, and opened its doors on September 10th. (When we asked who starts Christmas shopping the week after Labor Day, we were told "Tourists.") The Cottage consists of two rooms chockablock with ornaments and lights that are somewhat less daunting than the thousand blinking points of light in the Christmas shops of department stores. In the window is a Lionel train. (Trains count as decoration because they are set up under the tree.) A twenty-seven-foot strip of gold crinkled cellophane, three inches wide, to be tied in bows for a splashy effect, is $10. Nine feet of cranberry-red wooden beads are $6.50. No tinsel here. For tinsel, hit the five-and-ten. (Tree-trimmers are divided for life into pro- and anti-tinsel factions, and the pros are subdivided into the one-strand-at-a-time group and the clumpers, for [illegible] waterfall effect.) Among the less glittering decorations are an old-timey St. Nicholas and Santa Claus made of fabric-mâché ($16 for a five-and-a-half-inch figure, $17.50 for the seven-and-a-half-inch), and a plethora of wooden nutcrackers featuring very large teeth. A *musical* nutcracker of Mozart playing the Chopin E-Major Étude (it says so on the music) is not to be missed. The piano keys rival the teeth in splendor; $165. For a change of pace, Matt



"I'm beginning to feel really good about myself again."

McGhee, 22 Christopher Street, another small shop bursting with Christmas paraphernalia, sells Christmas-tree balls of an acidic yellow that can be seen at a hundred paces. A few of these would go a long way, and they come in three sizes, at $12, $18, and $24 for a box of six.

Cherchez, 862 Lexington Avenue (65th), has lovely silk and papier-mâché garlands in faded reds and the green of eucalyptus leaves. They are sturdy and flexible, so they can be put over, on, or around something. A twenty-seven-inch drop of flowers, leaves, and ribbons is $45; a thirty-inch garland with small peaches is $60. (All are also at Bergdorf Goodman.) Pinecones scented with Rondelitia, a fruity, spicy concoction from the sixteenth century, can be put in the fire, and they smell rather like mulled wine; a bag of sixteen or so is $20. A pair of twelve-inch red or green beeswax candles is $8, and beeswax candles last longer if they're chilled before they're lighted. A jumbo plastic Santa bag, twenty-six inches by forty-two, could solve a lot of wrapping problems, or be used as a tote; $2.50.

Keesal & Mathews, 1244 Madison Avenue (89th), has Christmas sconces of hand-painted tin, made in Tennessee: a tree, or a wreath with red bows, each one slightly different. The glass hurricane shade is removable, and the sconces hold regular or votive candles; $47.50. Metallic stars that will stick to the tree and are childproof (Austrian versions of Nerf balls, sort of) come in silver or gold in two sizes: the smaller is $6.75, and one large enough to top the tree is $17.50. Charming hand-painted Christmas gift tags, for appreciative adults only—red sleds, or pine trees with round snowflakes coming down, and watered-silk ties—are $3.95 apiece. A pound of bird feed in a red bag tied with a green ribbon and inevitably labelled "Christmas Is for the Birds" is $10.

NOW for some things to put under the tree, alongside that electric train. A welcome gift for any household might be a Stretch 35 camera, an invention of Kodak. It takes twelve panoramic pictures, three and a half inches by ten. Excellent for "View of Grand Tetons from Our Window," or "Lining Up for Chow at Reunion." The camera is light, and can be operated by a three-year-old: point, and press the button. The camera is then taken to a developer, and is not returned. (It is recycled by Kodak.) This camera is terrific. Enlarged, the photos can be impressive—calendar-photo material; $11.99 for the camera, $11.99 for the twelve prints. Another scientific marvel is Voiceprint, the voice-activated telephone that, according to the user's manual, is "so simple to use that it's almost self-instructing." Ha! It is for those who see some advantage in being able to pick up the phone and say "Rosedale" and get the fish market. We managed to install the phone, and "teach it" the phone numbers and the names (speaking, as the manual urged us to, "as if . . . introducing one person to another"), without engaging a private tutor or calling the P.R. firm in Hackensack for help. However, when Life's Partner, speaking as if introducing one person to another, tried to call Harold Leeds, he got Nancy Franklin. This kind of glitch is not covered in the chapter on troubleshooting in the user's manual, and entailed a call to Fred in Hackensack, who, revealing that we hadn't given our full attention to the manual, pointed out that on page seven it states that if two people wish to voice-dial the same name, separate entries must be made. ("There are very few sopranos who can sing bass," L.'s P. commented.) Voiceprint has room for fifty voice-dialling entries, and its Speed-Dialling directory has room for a hundred more. We are working up to "Call Logging," "Speaker Phone," and "Reviewing the Directory with a Voice Search." Voiceprint is quite a lot of fun, but God help anyone who loses the user's manual and doesn't have Fred's number; $249.95 at Hammacher Schlemmer, Bloomingdale's, and Macy's.

Giles & Co., 444 Columbus Avenue (81st), has a somewhat less demanding gift, called a Jolly Bag. It's a nylon bag on wheels, twelve by eight by twenty-eight inches, which folds up, wheels and all, into a neat pouch. It comes in black, red, or blue, and would be handy on a trip abroad or to the supermarket; $65. A letter opener disguised as a small black leather volume entitled "How to Open Your Envelopes" has a slot cut along the edges of its "pages." A letter is opened by passing one end of it through the slot. Most people open a certain amount of junk mail, for fear of throwing out something important—a credit card in a plain wrapper, notifica-

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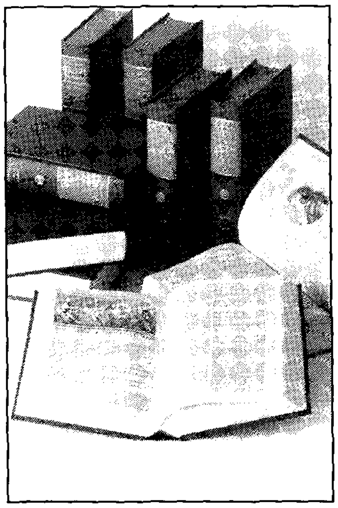

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tion that they've won that giant TV—and this invention has it over an ordinary letter opener or a finger, because it's quicker and makes a most satisfying *zip* sound; $28.

The design store at the Museum of Modern Art has established a branch in Grand Central, open from nine to seven, Monday through Saturday, which could prove a boon to commuters heading for the IRT or the 5:44 to Stamford. A simple, useful gift for any home is an epoxy-covered steel frame for stashing newspapers to be recycled. It's lightweight and unobtrusive, it folds, and it holds two weeks' supply of the *Times*. (It will not accept the *Daily News*.) It's $20. The MOMA store also sells pure-white stoneware, made in Finland, that is safe in everything—oven, microwave, freezer, dishwasher—but not childproof. The chubby gravy boat, which looks like a café-au-lait cup with a lip, can be parked in an oven until the last minute, then sped to the table, thus solving the prehistoric problem of lukewarm gravy; $35.

Ad Hoc Softwares (and also hardwares), 410 West Broadway (Spring), sells Newspaper Gloves, black cotton with white rubber traction dots on the palms which not only help in turning pages but keep the gloves from looking like an executioner's; $9.50. One of the snappiest bath sheets in town is made of waffle cotton, and it comes in fire-engine red with a two-inch bright-green border, or blue with a red border, or, most brilliant of all, yellow with red. Not only is it decorative, it dries quickly and has an invigorating, slightly abrasive quality; $69. Black-and-white hatboxes with an architectural theme, good for storing other things besides hats, come in four sizes and cost from $58 to $72.

Laura Fisher, 1050 Second Avenue (55th), has assembled a large collection of quilts at both ends of the price spectrum. At the high end are the appliqué quilts, dating from 1860 to 1890, which are mostly red and green on a white background, with names like Whig Rose and Hollies and Berries. They are right out of hope chests. The cheapos, so to speak, are classic patchwork quilts: a crazy quilt from around 1890, of flannelette in muted blues and grays, with interesting weaves; one made of feed-sacking-cotton prints; a fan quilt made of men's striped shirts; a red-white-and-blue quilt with a bit of brown, made from mattress ticking (the effect is striped). The prices run from $295 to $595, and are good value, given the prices that new quilts are getting. Among the oddments collected by Muriel Clarke, the antique-linens maven mentioned in these pages two weeks ago (Trouvaille Française, telephone 737-6015), is a very old—possibly eighteenth-century—worn, wool coverlet. It's American country, and striped in what's called an "overshot weave," in brick red, brown, maroon, and gray, with narrow stripes of pale blue running through. The dyes are all natural, and the piece would give instant authority to any room; $125.

Lynn Lorwin, the owner of Jones Road Antiques, which is cheek by jowl with Laura Fisher, devoted ten minutes to the question of why the public resists buying amateur paintings and drawings from the nineteenth century—the sort of thing done by Great-Aunt Mabel—and instead goes for botanical or balloon prints. Answer: The buyer's taste is not put on the line. Flying in the face of fashion, Mrs. Lorwin has assembled a small collection of amateur work, costing from $100 to $600: a painting on glass of flowers in a bowl ($125); a pen-and-ink-and-charcoal drawing of a house and barn ($200); a comic watercolor featuring George Washington robbing a bank to pay his troops ($175); a sandpaper drawing—charcoal on very, very fine sandpaper—with the fineness of detail of an etching ($650). All are in their original frames. Mrs. Lorwin's shop is like an edited attic—the real stuff, slightly the worse for wear. Consider a wooden violin case made by loving hands at home which has been fitted out with four shelves and a cubbyhole ($250). One of the most beautiful chairs we've seen in a long time is an Amish bentwood rocker, made with willow branches and oak slats, with an elegant back of six curved slats that join the frame, arms of twisted wood, a slatted seat, and a scalloped skirt; $850, as is.

OVER in Frank McIntosh's bailiwick, at Henri Bendel, the chatelaine of the table-linen department, Maryelaine Meighan, brought to our attention some black cotton napkins that have wide silver (or gold) glitzy lace edging. They cry out for a white piano; twenty-two inches square, and $20 each. An even larger napkin combines the Chinese influence *avec* plaid: a huge Chinese rose in the center, surrounded with a very un-Scottish plaid in Bangkokian colors. It's glorious; $20. A multicolored woven tablecloth from France—checks on vivid stripes—bound with red cording is fifty-four inches square, costs $315, and would look sensational with one of the candelabras across the aisle which are made by an American woman named Gertrude Barnstorm. Mr. McIntosh refers to the candelabras as mutants, "a cross between Calder and Pollock." They're iron (or *fer forgé*, as Mr. McIntosh calls it), twisted into pleasing sculptures and hand-painted in California colors, and do not look as though they had been done "by someone's five-year-old kid." With candles to match the paint colors, they are a most cheerful sight. A single candlestick is $100, a double one is $180, and the four-light is $350. Some service plates (they are almost too dazzling to eat off) with a *japonais* patchwork pattern are a wonderful lacquer red and have a patchwork border of lapis blue, black, taupe, and pumpkin. They are very Isabella Stewart Gardner, and come in ten- and twelve-inch sizes, for $68 and $85, respectively. Jaunty hand-blown dimpled glasses, painted with ribbons and polka dots (polka dots are big this year), are more suitable for seltzer than highballs; $35 and $42 each. Some hand-blown Irish glassware out of Kilkenny, called Jerepoint, is *scuola di* Simon Pearce, except for fluted stems of colored glass. (Simon Pearce doesn't have any truck with colored glass.) An oversized eight-inch wine or water goblet with air-twist stem in amethyst, cobalt, emerald, cranberry, black, or clear glass is $39; fluted bowls with colored pedestals are $75; pitchers with colored bases are $65. A bar pitcher, a carafe for a bedside table or an office, and a tumbler are all made of mercury glass; they are $55, $60, and $22, respectively. A triangular Art Deco glass vase, twelve inches high, is $28, and flies out of the store, according to Mr. McIntosh.

In the ever-expanding field of Italian ceramics, there's a soup plate at the L•S Collection, 765 Madison Avenue (66th), of the following colors, reading from the center out: mustard, tomato-red, white rim with black edge. It's $35. This could go on any white plate but would be a knockout on a white plate sold here that has a scribble of red and black down the center, a smaller scribble of blue and black, plus four black polka dots, on the rim, and a yellow edge; $45. Moving backward from the free-form to the *ancien régime*, there is Royal Copenhagen/Georg Jensen, down the street at 683 Madison (61st), which is celebrating the two-hundredth anniversary of Flora Danica, arguably the most beautiful dinnerware in the world and unarguably the most expensive; one dinner plate, for instance, is $850. (The cheapest piece is a butter chip, for $350.) Each piece is hand-painted with a flower, moss, mushroom, or other plant that grows in Denmark, and the Latin name of each specimen is recorded on the underside. The rim is 18k. gold. It is believed that the original pieces were intended as a gift to Catherine the Great from the Danish King Christian VII, but the delivery time was twelve years and the Czarina died before the set was completed, so the Danish royal family lucked out and got to keep it. There were over eighteen hundred pieces in the original set; about fifteen hundred have survived—a percentage that, factored out over two hundred years, speaks well for the palace staff. Anyone who thinks that this store is stuck in the past, though, should have a look at Kosta Boda's Palm Tree glassware, which could be called Mexican-Swedish in feeling. The bowls are clear glass, the stems and bottoms of the bowls have a stylized palm-tree effect, and the bases are solid colors, such as cobalt, amethyst, and pale green. Although they look hand-painted, they are the result of a complex process in which colored-glass powder is dissolved in glue and applied to the glass, and the glass is put back in the oven; the heat makes the glue evaporate, and the design becomes fused to the body. The catch is that for the fusion to take place the glass has to be brought back almost to the temperature at which it was originally blown, and it sometimes shatters. Consequently, a water goblet is $65, a wineglass is $62, a champagne flute is $57.

Contemporary Porcelain, 105 Sullivan Street (Spring), specializes in the far-out by far-flung ceramists, with some Americans thrown in. You'll find unusual shapes and colors, one-of-a-kind tea sets, cruets, plates, mugs, and bowls from Australia, New Zealand, Austria, Japan, and Maine, among other places. Naoko Seki makes charming porcelain "bag" vases, modelled on slightly crumpled paper bags. She joins two (or sometimes three), one in front of another, and she colors them pale, subtle variations of gray, cream, pink, lilac, turquoise, teal, and yellow. The vases are four and six inches high, and are lovely to look upon, with or without flowers; from $60 to $85.

A new shop, Sara, selling Japanese ceramics and lacquerware, recently opened at 952 Lexington Avenue (69th). It's the shop-as-museum approach to display—everything looks like an art object, and one tends to whisper. The wares here, if not of museum quality, are both unusual and beautiful. Misty colors blend into each other and end up looking rather like landscapes. Some plates that are a shaded blue on one half and a shaded green on the other, with irregular apricot and gold lines around the edge, are priced from $25 to $100. Pale-green plates have a crazed finish and two blue streaks around the edge; $80 or $90 apiece. Demitasse cups made of three different kinds of layered clay (blue, tan, and cream) look like marble but are much more delicate; $100 for a cup and saucer. Wherever the eye alights in this store, it finds something pleasing.

Peipers+Kojen, up the street at 1023 Lexington Avenue (74th), is another small shop-as-gallery, but it's European rather than Far Eastern in flavor. It specializes in the decorative and occasionally useful things that we can all get along without but which might add a fillip to daily life. Pincushions in the shape of either an elephant (preferably) or a shoe, one inch long, in sterling with either a red or a navy-blue velvet top, are $130 and $135, respectively. A goosenecked hanger of stainless steel, from the Berlin Industrial Design Group (numbered, dated, and signed, if anyone cares), is thirty inches long when it's extended, and looks like a piece of sculpture; $92. Modern ceram-

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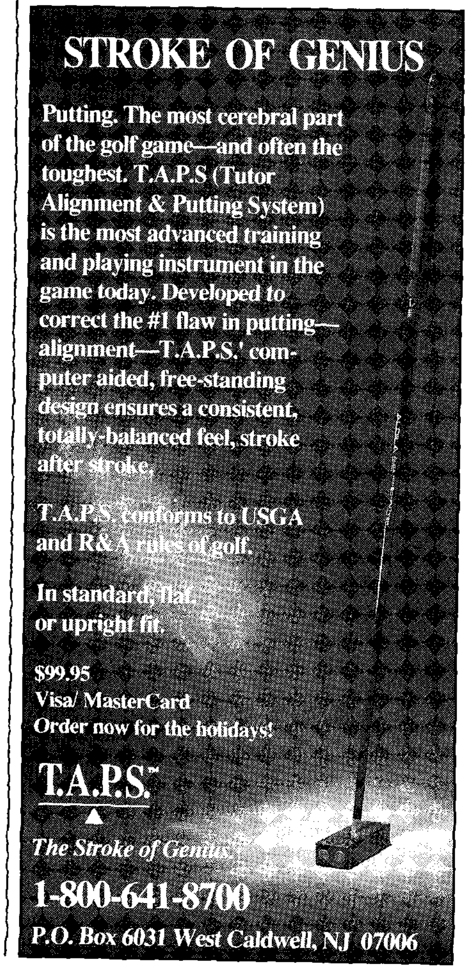

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ic scissors, from Japan, which never need sharpening (for this reason, ceramics are the future of cutlery, we were told), are $62 and $34 (for the kiddie size). A shiny aluminum nailbrush, from Italy, has black bristles and comes in a pouch, and is the nearest thing to a glamorous nailbrush that we've seen; $25. A pocket travelling flask of stainless steel, from Scotland, looks like an oversized pocket watch, with a brass medallion and a small brass ring on top. It's light and holds half a cup; $72. A collapsible cup, made by the same company, folds to resemble a pocket watch; $84. A reversible glass —one end is a cobalt cone for champagne, the other a green bowl for sherbet—can triple as a votive-candle holder, but *not* all at the same time; $68. Colorful pieces of the Berlin Wall set in acrylic cost $72, $98, and $135, depending on how large a piece of the wall one wants. The Berlin Wall as jewelry, in the form of stunning domed rings made of acrylic, is $68.

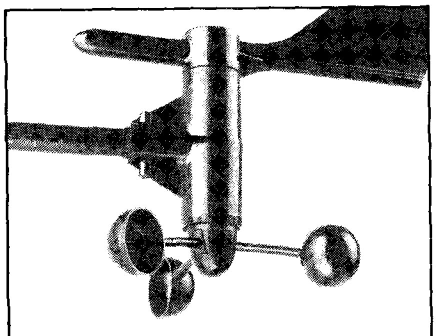
Terra Cotta, at 259 West 4th Street (Charles), is a new store, run by a mother and daughter, Nina and Lauren Levy, who are interested in handmade objects, be they ceramics, toys, glass, jewelry, or miniature furniture. Collapsible baskets (they don't fold up, they sink flat, like a spiral cardboard ornament) are made of cherry or sapele (mahogany from Cameroon). They are easy to store, and they look good; from $35 to $60, depending on the wood and the size. Carol Weiss makes good-looking pottery containers in white or cobalt with tan trim, such as a pasta bowl with "FETTUCINE" and "LINGUINE" and so on incised in block letters around the rim ($75) and a crock for "SPATULAS" and "LADLES" and so on ($38). Henry Cavanagh is the creator of what the Levys call Whimsical Commentaries on Urban Living, among them mugs ($55), cream pitchers ($90), and teapots ($140); a diner, a social club, a cigar store, a candy store, and a fine-arts warehouse each appear on a mug, for example, and everything can be personalized. Miniature twig furniture from Ohio (called Around the Bend, alas) costs from $36, for a side table, to $80, for a double four-poster bed (a chaise longue, for $60, is especially appealing), and all the pieces can be ordered in grownup sizes, for considerably more.

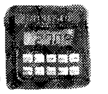
Contre-Jour, 190 Columbus Avenue (68th), sells hand-painted wooden salad bowls, in barn red or Williamsburg green, that have been distressed, and treated so that they can be washed; from $18 to $45, depending on the size. Matching salad servers are $15. Four hand-painted dessert plates, with either fruit (pear, peach, plum, and two cherries) or vegetables (carrot, onion, three turnips, and two pea pods), have mottled rims in yellow, green, carnelian, and blue, and look old and pretty; $90. A graceful teapot (teapot design has gone bananas) of pale-yellow Limoges, with a blue knob on the lid and a blue handle, is $120. This shop always has something jokey, such as glass candy that is real-looking to a fault, and this year it's ice cubes made of plain glass filled with colored water. They freeze, and five of them cost $35.

Simon Pearce, 385 Bleecker Street (Perry), has come up with a glass pitcher that holds a gallon ($95), and he has also branched out into shiny black stoneware. (His father, Philip, still makes black-and-white earthenware; his brother Stephen works in terra-cotta.) The black is a rich, rather than a dead, black. A square dinner plate is $26; a salad plate and a soup bowl with slanted sides are $22 apiece.

A SHOP with the uncatchy name of Robert Homma William Lipton, 27 East 61st Street, is a sort of grownups' playroom. Two "Happy New Year Merry Christmas" glasses from the turn of the century are $225; five pieces of ginseng chewing gum, gift-wrapped, are $3; an English bobby's whistle is $20; a Japanese praying mantis made of bamboo is $9; a bamboo cricket cage is $15. Someone who misses the sound of the milk train in the early morning might like a red whistle of carved wood, eight inches long, that does indeed sound exactly like a train whistle; $20. Pyrite dollars ("land dollars" *as opposed* to "sand dollars"), from southern Illinois, said to be three hundred and fifty million years old are $36. Pyrite, commonly called fool's gold, shimmers with bronze, copper, silver, pink, purple, blue, or green overtones. Fossilized sand dollars only twelve million years old are $20 each. Sponges, legally harvested, cost from $45 to $125, and the reason for buying one is the color: aubergine.

Cabbages & Kings, 813 Lexington





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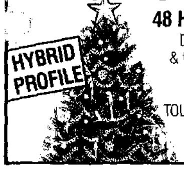

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Avenue (63rd), may have more gifts stashed in a small space than any other store in New York. A shopper can stand in the middle of the store and see all except the price tags, and there's a lot to see, both new and old, one of a kind and many of a kind. A broom of dried palm fronds, from Anguilla, easy on the eyes and easy to shake out so that it won't turn grungy with age, is $8. A hearth brush, twenty inches long, has a Santa Claus face in a red hood carved on the handle; $9.50. A heavy silver-plated wine funnel, with a gold wash on the inside, unscrews for washing; $48. Pitchers, old and new, run from $18, for a bar pitcher—"Grant's Whisky," it says, in gold lettering on navy blue—to $265, for one representing Prime Minister Gladstone in majolica, with the letters "G-O-M" (for "Grand Old Man"). A folding shooting stick from England, with a black plastic handle and a green shaft, is light and easily portable; $85. Another shooting stick, a relic of the true World's Fair, has tripod legs, and the legend "New York World's Fair 1939" is printed on the wooden seat; $95. A demilune brass umbrella stand with a wrought-iron drip pan is $125. The Christmas Annex of this shop sells a fringed linsey-woolsey throw, woven in North Carolina, that is so appealing that it would probably not be put away with the Christmas things. Its colors are barn red, off white, and dark green. One side has a cream background, the other a red one, with a reverse pattern. The first two lines of "A Visit from St. Nicholas" are woven in, along with such other Christmas symbols as stockings, drums, a church, Santa Claus, and holly; $55. And, for the truly lazy, there is a battery-operated snow globe, starring either St. Nicholas or Santa Claus, on a red wooden base; $18.

William Meyer, a co-owner of William-Wayne, 324 East 9th Street, says that his store is called a "destination" shop, meaning that it requires, and is worth, a special trip. The owners have a good eye, and almost everything is under $100. Silver-plated salt and pepper columns, one and a half inches high, are $8 a pair. A two-foot, four-fold carpenter's rule, of boxwood and brass, is $40, and for $3 more it can be packed in a tartan pencil box made of lacquered paper. Sturdy French chairs for children are made of plastic webbing, with a rattan frame, and come in

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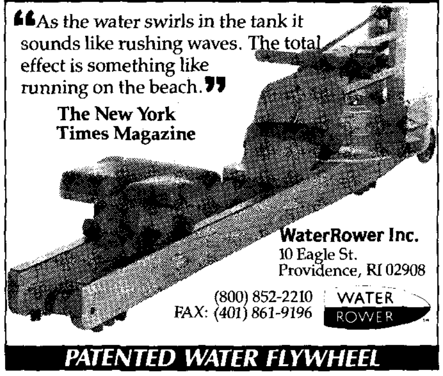

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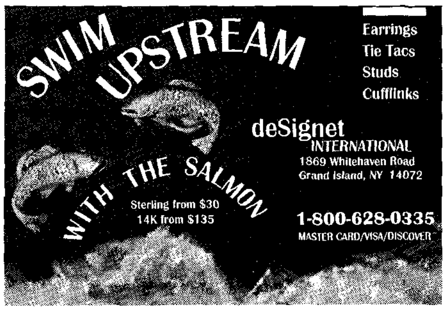

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blue and white, or red and vanilla. They can accommodate grownups in a pinch (they support the back); $80 for a rocker, $75 for an armchair. These chairs are also available at D. F. Sanders, 127 East 57th Street, 386 West Broadway (Spring), and 952 Madison (75th). A woven wool-and-acrylic throw with a nice "hand" is washable, and comes in plain ivory or forest green; $90. An eight-foot garland of hand-painted pomegranates is $37.50, and round candles with a metallic finish, which makes them look like Christmas-tree balls, are $12.50 each. An eight-inch angel made of Kraft paper mâché is $5. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson's Pure Butter Fruit & Nut Biscuits are "hand-made, to an old English recipe," and no home should be without a tin; $8.

Some white-wine vinegar, out of Grafton, Vermont, has to be the prettiest bottle of vinegar extant. It's square and slightly pinched, and has small red peppers, dill, peppercorns, and garlic floating around in it, as in an aquarium. The bottle is sealed with beeswax, and an identifying tag tied with twine completes the presentation; the eight-ounce bottle is $10, the twenty-ounce is $18, and the vinegar is good. Wolfman-Gold & Good, 116 Greene Street, has cornered the market on this particular item. The store sells everything from the eight-ounce size, with red or white vinegar and a selection of five different herbs, including tarragon, up to a fifty-eight-ounce bottle, for $35.

Good news: Dean & DeLuca again has Opinel knives, French folding knives with a carbon blade that disappears into the handle, for $8 and $10, and a key-ring whisk, for $5. Black rubber *gants de ménage*, with a deep checked cuff long enough to protect shirtsleeves, are soft on the inside, flexible, and strong; one size fits all—all women, that is. (The gloves come from France.) They're $22. Gorgeous, heavy cotton blankets, from Myanmar (formerly Burma), in a grid pattern rather like a Mondrian, come in eye-popping colors—lavender and flaming red on a black background, for example. They could serve as tablecloths, bedcovers, or picnic cloths. They are four by seven feet, and tough; $75. Anyone seriously into Mexican cooking might appreciate a tortilla press, weighing ten pounds ($45), or a *molcajete*, a mortar and pestle made out of volcanic rock, and "the best thing going for grinding chilies or making guacamole," according to Joel Dean, who obviously *is* into Mexican cuisine; $25. It so happens that neither of these articles is mentioned in "The Well-Tooled Kitchen," a compendium of over five hundred items, put together by the redoubtable Fred Bridge with Jean F. Tibbetts (Morrow, $24.95). They cover just about everything else, however, from a chef's knife to a *godet à l'escargot*. Loaded with photographs, tips, editorial comments, history, and recipes from the great and near-great in the culinary world.

Bergdorf Goodman sells recycled hotel silver—heavy silver that can take a lot of punishment. Some of it has the name of the previous owner on it, such as Bentals or Coburg. Coffeepots run from $150 to $250, a cream pitcher is $45, a sugar bowl is $95. A partitioned vegetable dish for one person is $75; for two people, $150. Nice for leftovers. Barneys has similar coffeepots, but these are copies, of the Normandie and Orient Express service; $178 and $180, respectively. Sugar bowls (with lids) and creamers are $85 each. Also at Barneys are wooden hatboxes, hand-painted in free-form patterns—some geometric, some theatrical—in offbeat colors. They are turned out by a young couple from Massachusetts: he makes the boxes of pressed board; she paints them. Prices range from $80, for one eight inches in diameter, up to $145, for a sixteen-inch one.

MRS. SHARP goes into exhaustive detail about St. Lucia's Day—December 13th, and a big deal in Sweden. That morning, the eldest daughter of the house, wearing a wreath of lighted candles on her head, "leads her brothers and sisters in a procession into their parents' darkened bedroom to deliver a surprise breakfast." If Dear Reader would like to establish this custom in her own home, she may be relieved to hear that a battery-operated St. Lucia crown can be obtained from Pleasant Company, P.O. Box 190, Middleton, Wisconsin 53562-0190; telephone 800 845-0005. In preparation for the event, a unisex bed tray from the Bombay Company, 1018 Madison Avenue (78th), 2001 Broadway (68th), and 166 East 63rd Street, might be in order. It's exactly like the pink-and-white bed trays that have been around for years, except that it has mahogany veneer and there's no wicker fence around the tray to get squashed. The tray lifts off, to reveal an adjustable bookrest underneath, and there are two side baskets for reading material; $129. To go over a bed or chair, a reading table on four claw feet (no wheels) has an adjustable top that moves up and down *and* slides back and forth (easier on the rug); $179.

Ubiquitous presents this year: A lemon squeezer, designed by Philippe Starck, that suggests either a Montgolfier balloon or an insect on three very long legs is to be found at D. F. Sanders, Peipers+Kojen, and Frank McIntosh, to name only a few sites. This does not inspire confidence, but Peipers+Kojen actually squeezed a lemon and reports that the juice does fall directly into the glass. Some stores hope to pass this off as suitable for squeezing oranges. Forget it—it's for the bar or for children (if juice boxes haven't replaced lemonade); from $75 to $85, depending on the store. Novelty ceramic salt-and-pepper sets are also prevalent. Cabbages & Kings has a lawyer set: three tomes (pepper) and a gavel (salt); $12. At D. F. Sanders, there's a lunchbox with thermos, in shiny chrome, with a brown top on the thermos; $16. Mood Indigo, 181 Prince Street, the fountainhead of vintage salt-and-pepper duos, has assembled a States series. The state is for the salt, the symbol for the pepper: Mass., bean pot; Conn., mortarboard; Ohio, tire; Iowa, corn. These are from $38 up. Then there is the yellow rubber duck that is showing up everywhere. It's not Donald or Huey or Dewey or Louie; it's the old bathtub toy, and it's $5.

One store where you're definitely not going to find a yellow rubber ducky is Asprey, 725 Fifth Avenue (56th). It's so quiet you could hear a pin drop if the carpeting weren't so thick. Very restful and very expensive. We ventured inside in search of a classy Old-Fashioned glass to give to a friend with a penchant for single-malt whiskey. Asprey offers twelve models, ranging in price from $45 to $350. On our way upstairs to the O.F. glasses, we passed a couple of lead-crystal candlesticks, as good-looking as any we've seen. They are reminiscent of the old Steuben candlesticks, but are shorter and chubbier. The round base and holder are large in proportion to the height, and the candlestick can be reversed; a pair four and a half inches high is $180, and a slightly taller pair is $230. Asprey has a group of sweet Victorian bowls, circa 1860. They come in different colors (opaline, topaz, emerald), some are fluted, and all were originally lanterns used to decorate trees, but have been recycled as posy bowls by Asprey; $135 apiece, more or less. For one real-estate tycoon to give to another: the English Monopoly set here. The board is inlaid mahogany, hand-painted with gold leaf; the tokens are sterling; the houses and hotels are silver gilt. The names of the properties have been changed, of course, with Boardwalk and Park Place becoming Mayfair (£400) and Park Lane (£350). The whole operation is housed in a mahogany-and-leather box; $6,250. (Ex-real-estate tycoons can always step up the street to F. A. O. Schwarz.)

Mrs. Sharp reports that Victorian parents filled each stocking with "something to eat, something to read, something to play with, and something they need." Half of this prescription has been filled with the Wilsons' biscuits and the yellow ducky. E.A.T. Gifts, 1062 Madison Avenue (81st), sells red or white toothbrushes with a pine-tree design and green or red bristles ($4.50) which could come in handy almost anytime, and for something to read, John Julius Norwich's Christmas Cracker, now celebrating its twentieth anniversary, is yours for $5.95 at the Morgan Library.

THE CHRISTMAS TABLE

"WHILE visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads," that lilting Christmas mantra, combines expectation and confidence. Never mind that nobody has ever found out precisely what a sugarplum is—it's not even in Mrs. Beeton's "Book of Household Management" (1861). But Mrs. Sharp knows—knows, and, furthermore, has a recipe for them. They are made of fine-chopped dried fruits, bound with orange juice and lemon juice, sherry and brandy, then rolled in sugar, and may be the only sweetmeat that cannot be bought in New York. No problem finding chocolates, however, and the field is so overcrowded that we are mentioning only four. Three of them are local, one-person operations, all chocolatiers of the first rank, and the fourth is a Frenchman. The candies are handmade and fresh, the couverture is thin. Larry Burdick has finally got

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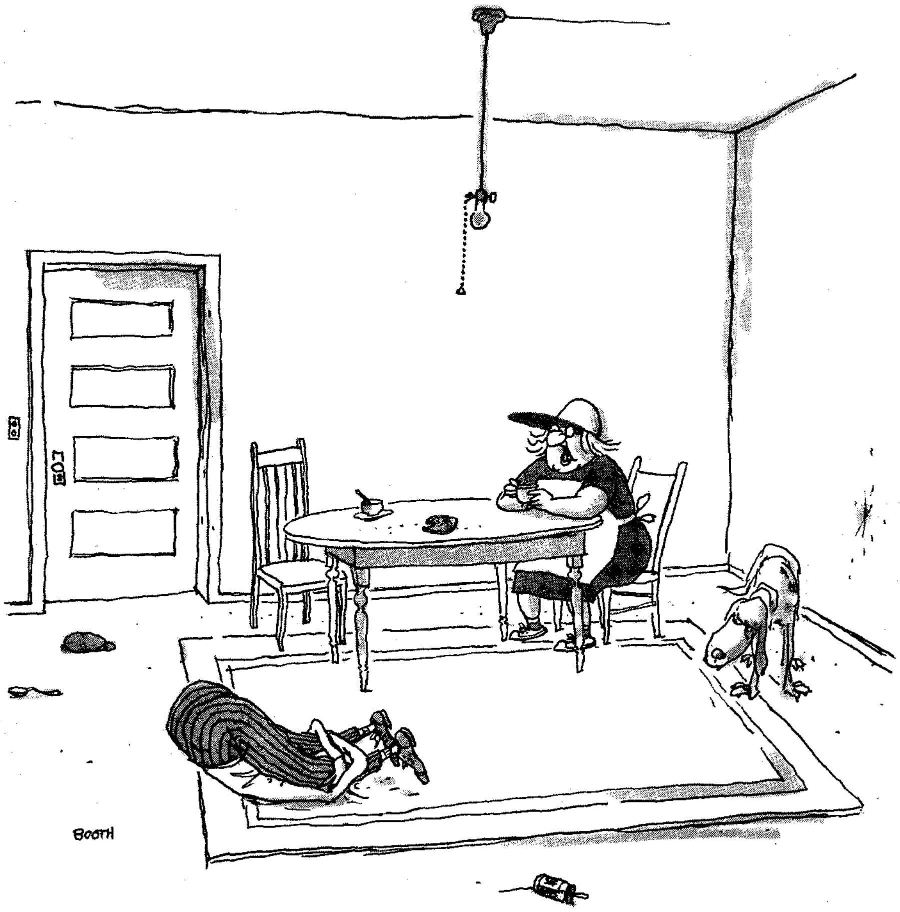

"*Leon, honey, you break all the rules of dramaturgy.*"

• •

all his machinery off the docks and in working order, to the point where customers will soon be able to order direct from him; telephone 996-2419. Mr. Burdick turns out thirteen kinds of small, perfect chocolates. The most popular are his mice with silk tails, which he has decided to pack in larger boxes so their ears won't get crushed. The quality and presentation of Mr. Burdick's chocolates are *très raffinés*, and the chocolates themselves melt in the mouth. They come packed in stylish redwood boxes, at Zona (97 Greene Street), Dean & DeLuca, and Two for the Pot (220 Clinton Street, Brooklyn), which is the one store that carries a full line. There are between sixty and seventy chocolates in a pound; $36 in bulk. Dean & DeLuca has latched on to Ortrud Münch Carstens, who, according to Giorgio DeLuca, is "a chocolate scientist." ("Ortrud works with her hands enrobed in Surgeon's gloves, which takes nothing away from her dexterity in fashioning the bonbons and other chocolate creations, but protects the chocolate," the brochure reads.) A single dark-chocolate truffle is $1.80; a small chocolate log filled with prunelle is $3.50. When we arrived at Normandie Chocolat, 338 East 116th Street, the store and residence of Frederic and Angela Covo, we found Mr. Covo, chocolatier, fashioning a woman's pump made of dark chocolate, with a four-inch heel and a red toe—a special order for a shoe designer. He continues to make six kinds of truffles, and for the holiday season, or any gala event, will be happy to transform his truffles with Candy Prisms—a light sprinkling of edible glitter (no dyes or chemicals here) that refracts the light. Three-inch Christmas trees, repoussé and iridescent on one side, flat on the other, are $3 apiece, and would look festive at a Christmas dinner. Everything is to order, and everything is gift-wrapped, either in a box or in cellophane, and the Covos will deliver in Manhattan or ship by U.P.S.; telephone 289-7404. Robert Linxe is to chocolate as Petrossian is to caviar. He has three shops in Paris, and recently opened an outpost in New York, La Maison du Chocolat, 25 East 73rd Street. The prevailing color scheme is brown—décor, boxes, ribbon, and merchandise. Very grand-luxe, as are the chocolates, which are unsurpassed in quality and taste. There are some thirty-four variations to choose from, and to single out one as the best would be irresponsible. Truffles are $45 a pound; Arribas (thin squares of ganache with a couverture of fairly bitter chocolate) are $27 for twenty-four. A shipment of fresh bonbons arrives every week, and in the new year, the truffles will be made in the back of the store.

RÉMY GAUTIER will prepare and deliver a Christmas dinner, in whole or in part, for six or more. It's for adults only; the cuisine is haute. Gautier is a chef—we're talking *dodin-bouffant* (see the Fred Bridge book) here—and his food is stylish dinner-party food: Borscht Countess Walewska (Gautier was chef to the Countess d'Ornano in Paris, a distant relative of the Countess W.); Civet of Sea Food (scallops, baby shrimp, pike, and salmon in a red-wine sauce, with shredded sorrel); a small turkey, en croûte, with a pâté-chestnut stuffing. The turkey is boned and presliced, a mushroom duxelles is spread on each slice, and then the slices are put back together, with the skin, and covered with puff pastry. The bird is underdone, so that it can be reheated with impunity. Mikado, a raspberry sorbet covered with thin layers of white- and dark-chocolate mousse, then dusted with white- and dark-chocolate shavings, is surrounded by a pool of raspberry coulis, and planted on a biscuit to hold it together. Gautier is up to cooking anything for any occasion (including simple box lunches), and his drivers are trained to give cooking instructions. Telephone, and discuss: 289-1230.

What most families want for Christmas dinner can be provided by The Cleaver Company, 229 West Broadway. Mary Cleaver is a Bennington graduate who started out in ceramics but, after moving to the Big Apple, decided that cooking was her most marketable skill. Everything tastes like the food in a home where there is a pearl in the kitchen. Among the offerings on the Christmas menu are pumpkin soup with caramelized apples ($4 per serving), roast goose with dried-fruit stuffing ($10 per pound), wild-mushroom ragout ($15 a pound), chestnut purée ($10 a pound), braised red cabbage with pears and ginger ($8 a pound), red chard timbale ($4 per serving), and a vanilla pecan bread pudding, with Tipsy Fruit Sauce, which is not just one of the best bread puddings but one of the best desserts we've ever had. Cleaver will fill your own container; $3.25 per serving.

Yura & Company, 1650 Third Avenue (92nd), turns out food for any occasion that might arise over the holidays. Pinwheels are very thin slices of tomato and smoked turkey and arugula, with mayo, all rolled up in lavash, which is an Eastern bread rather like ironed suède. They are not only decorative but delicious, and they're so thick that you can cut them in half, at one stroke doubling the number and increasing manageability; seventy-five cents. For a grand Christmas buffet or dinner party, the coulibiac would knock the socks off the guests. The pastry is rich brioche dough, and as a substitute for vesiga (the marrow from the backbone of a sturgeon) Yura uses rice, chopped egg, dill, and tapioca. The salmon is layered with this mixture and sliced raw mushrooms, and served with melted butter and lemon juice; $130 for an eight-inch, up to $250 for an eighteen-inch. The ham en croûte—in this case a decorated brioche dough—has a thick layer of duxelles made with ground pork, currants, onions, macadamia nuts, and mushrooms between the ham and the crust. It's from an old English recipe, according to Buddy, the chef, and comes with a Madeira sauce; $12.50 a pound. For the jaded palate, Yura suggests lamb shanks. She thinks (and she's right) that osso bucco is too expensive, so she substitutes lamb for veal, with gremolada (fine-chopped parsley, lemon peel, and garlic), braised celery and carrot sticks, a sauce made with onions and bits of tomato, and gnocchi; $10 a portion. Among the dessert offerings are thin crêpes filled with caramelized apple slices, and served with a cider sauce. Awesome. $5 for two crêpes. Everything reheats well; nothing tastes reheated. Tuiles made with crystallized ginger have a delayed kick; $10 a half pound. Candied grapefruit peel, pinkish in color because Yura uses pink grapefruit and cooks the rind in a mixture of sugar and orange juice, is $8 a half pound.

The Silver Palate, 274 Columbus Avenue (73rd), has always had a comprehensive Christmas and New Year's menu, and we particularly recommend, perhaps for Christmas Eve, the lobster bisque, with an unheard-of three ounces of lobster meat per pint, and so sustaining that it is almost a meal in itself; $12 a pint. And the fennel and carrots roasted in extra-virgin olive oil will not only reheat well once but reheat well twice; $16 a pound. (Roasted veggies are creeping up on ratatouille in popularity; if not actually roasted, they are branded to look grilled.) For a ham or a goose, Kurowycky's, 124 First Avenue (7th), should be kept in mind, partly because everything in the store is superior and partly because of the Kurowyckys, father and son, both called Jerry. (It's a second-and-third-generation store, and the fourth generation, George, is being brought along, but he's only four.) They make their own sausages and smoke their own hams, which need no cooking and should be served at room temperature. The hams weigh between twelve and sixteen pounds (bone in), and a fifteen-pound ham will feed forty people for a buffet, Jerry *père* says; ham is $4.29 a pound, and they will sell half a ham. The goose here is sold frozen, for $2.79 a pound, with oral or printed instructions on cooking choucroute thrown in free. For the holidays, Mortimer's, 1057 Lexington Avenue (75th), will again have bourbon-baked hams, weighing fourteen pounds, more or less. Besides the bourbon the crust includes bread crumbs, brown sugar, and mustard; $6.50 a pound. Mortimer's chef, Steve Attoe, has come up with a sublime fish soup. It's not a bisque, it's not a chowder, and there was apparently a fairly long trial-and-error period before he arrived at the perfect formula; $7 a pint. Mr. Attoe is also making a three-star Christmas pudding, and, although the genre is not everyone's idea of a holiday treat, his version, paler than most, could easily win converts. It comes in a white crock and must be steamed for two hours; a twenty-ounce pudding is $17.50 (and it is *small*), a thirty-ounce one $25. The only echt-English plum pudding in town is to be found, as always, at Soutine, 104 West 70th Street; one and a half pounds in a white crock is $21. This shop is a dab hand with sweets—particularly its Christ-

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mas Fudge Cakes (five miniatures for $5)—but this year, feeling that enough is enough, it cradles twenty-seven inches of its own French bread, with raised dough designs of a Christmassy nature, in a wicker basket lined with red-and-green calico, and tied with ribbons. There is a choice of French white, sourdough, or whole wheat; $30.

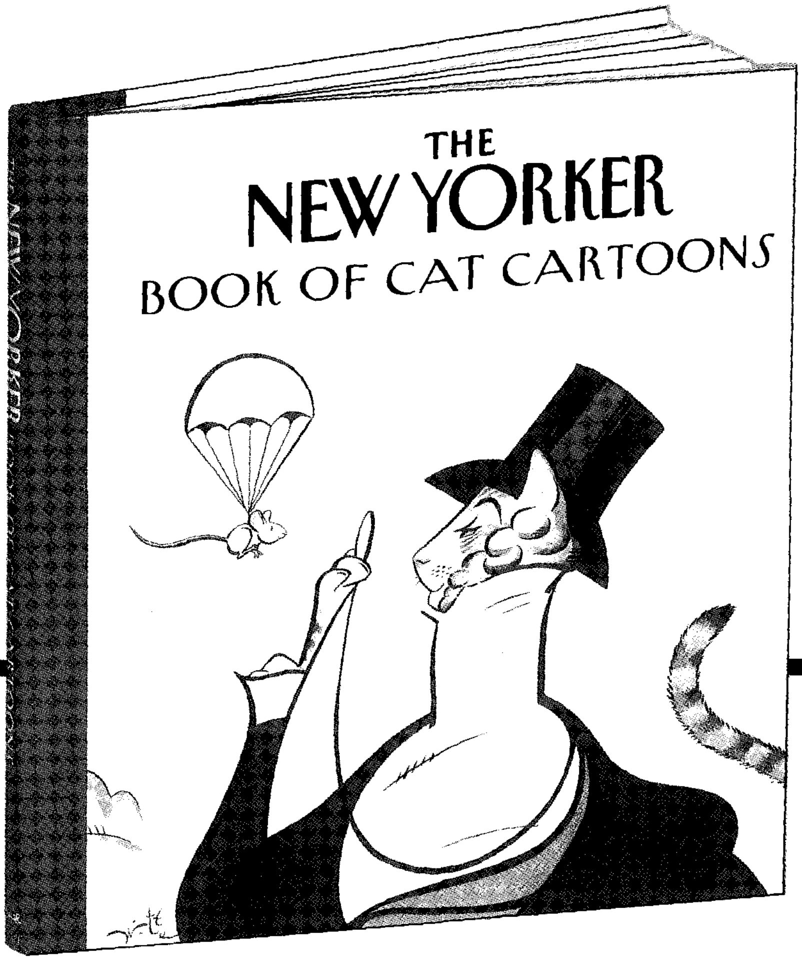
Flash: Maison Glass, 111 East 58th Street, has established a smoked-salmon connection with an industry in Connemara consisting of two huts—one for the preparation of the wild salmon, the other for the smoking. The salmon is smooth, neither oily nor salty, and it has been gently smoked over oak (rather than heavily smoked over peat from the bogs), and shipped in insulated crates; $40 a pound, and perfect.

PÂTISSERIES are in a frenzy of activity. Jean Kahn, of Les Friandises, 665 Amsterdam Avenue (92nd), not content with the traditional croquembouche, has designed one in the shape of a wreath, decorated with marzipan cherries and leaves, plus bow. The choux pastry is filled with praline cream; $95 for one that would feed fifteen to twenty. Her gingerbread house (there's been a falloff in gingerbread houses this year) has a roof tiled with Necco wafers. The only place she could find them was a Woolworth in New Jersey, and she bought the lot. Gummi Bears stand along the ridgepole, and the stained-glass windows are made of sucre coulé. Among the other decorations are a tree, a star, a candy cane, gumdrops, and cinnamon hearts (no chocolate); one hundred per cent edible, and $60. Miss Kahn, an École Lenôtre graduate, is making ornaments of sucre coulé. Inspired by a cake she constructed for UNICEF, decorated with sucre-coulé children of the world, she has made boys and girls, dressed in native costume. The clothes are opaque, the bases translucent. Other works include Christmas trees in two sizes; snowflakes; and flat, round ornaments, to hang or not; $3.75 to $7.

In Brooklyn, Marquet Pâtisserie, 235 Smith Street (near Atlantic Avenue), is running up meringue snowmen for the Christmas trade. Although only two and a half inches high, they are fitted out with hats, scarves, buttons, eyes, and carrot noses; $3.50 apiece. The Tarte Paysanne here, of very thin puff-pastry dough, is filled with sliced apples sautéed in Calvados and arranged with mathematical precision. If this tart appeared on the table once a week, it would not be too often; a six-inch tart is $12.50. Alex Miles, another Lenôtre pupil, and the owner and guiding spirit of La Bonne Pâtisserie (formerly The Cakery), in Dumont, New Jersey, now has three outlets in Manhattan: Oren's Daily Roast, 434 Third Avenue (30th), 1144 Lexington Avenue (79th), and 1574 First Avenue (81st). His pastries have the perfect conformation of doll-house food, and no one is going to think the hosts made them. Mr. Miles divides them into four basic food groups—cakes, tarts, petits fours, and cookies—and he delivered about five hundred and sixty-three samples to our office. After coming down from a sugar high, the Taste Squad handed in written comments, and close analysis of the returns showed that the winners were from Groups II and III—tartlettes and petits fours: the former included Belgian shredded apple tart, for $1.95 ("Great brown-sugar undertaste, tender apples," "Very elegant and French-looking, very rich pastry and cream stuff"); and the red-currant tart, for $2.25 ("Very sweet crust counterbalanced by *tart* currants," "Sharp and sweet, *stunning* to look at"). Among the petits fours, the chocolate-on-chocolate cake got high marks ("Amazing!" and "Moist, chocolaty, like drinking a cake!"). A five-inch cake, in the form of a cream-capped pyramid, called Fuji, is *pour épater*. Its components include a green-tea Bavarian cream and red-bean paste, and the entire edifice is covered with chocolate that has been spray-gunned, warm, onto a cold cake for a velour finish ("A postmodern food experience—tastes good even though it shouldn't," "Very subtle flavor; several different sweetnesses"); $27.

Natasha Straub, a young Austrian woman, has been in business for eight months. She makes her pastries in the morning and delivers them in the afternoon. Her card reads, "NATASHA'S—FINE EUROPEAN PASTRIES." You can say that again. In her vast repertory are bite-size Christmas cookies, each one a little gem, although perhaps the Vanilla-Kipferl ($6 a dozen) and the Stars with Red Currant ($8 a dozen) have a slight edge. The Taste Squad also fell about exclaiming over the flourless chocolate/hazelnut cake ("Moist, dense cake, wonderful nutty flavor," "Tastes just like Oma's," "Extremely homemade tasting"); an eight-inch cake is $25. Mrs. Straub will make pastries to order, and she is a great addition to the scene if she doesn't drop in her tracks; telephone 571-7514. Three morsels from Park Avenue Gourmandise, 47 East 29th Street, that are always on hand, made fresh every day: two-and-a-half-inch chocolate éclairs, small babas, and cream puffs; $1 each, or $10 a dozen.

So much for the European pastries—on to the American. Ruth Ann's Bake Shop, 155 East 84th Street, owned and run by Ruth Ann Neal, has added three kinds of focaccia (everyone except pâtissiers has added focaccia) made of hard-wheat flour, and Ruth Ann's daughter, Amanda, makes angel-food cakes to order that are better than most people's mothers used to make; a ten-inch cake is $20, a large slice is $3. The pear-and-ginger tart at Neuman & Bogdonoff, 1385 Third Avenue (78th), so exquisitely arranged that it looks unreal, earned the comments "Perfection!" and "Great, delicately tinged ginger taste, perfect balance of pear and ginger." An eight-inch tart is $20. CBK of New York has opened a cozy shop at 226 East 83rd Street, with a window seat and cushions, coffee and a free cookie. This is an out-and-out cookie store, with an emphasis on packaging: tins, jars, boxes, and teddy bears. A Jewel Bag (mentioned in this column last year) is a cellophane bag filled with packages of four predetermined cookies wrapped in different shades of Mylar; $5 for a third of a pound, but the packages can be bought individually for $1.25 each, and could decorate an entire tree, with the added bonus that the ornaments self-destruct. Holiday Angels, made of puff pastry sprinkled with sugar, are $1.50 each; almond crescents, and Hazelnut Wedding Cookies dusted with powdered sugar are highly recommended, and cost $12 a pound. Neither is gift-wrapped. Taylor's, 523 Hudson Street (Charles), is owned by Cindi and Spartan Taylor; Cindi is the former pastry chef at Neuman & Bogdonoff, and her unbeatable lopsided chocolate soufflé cakes can now be bought downtown as well as uptown at Neuman & Bog. Prices at Taylor's range from $5.50, for a three-and-a-half-inch cake, to $20 for a ten-inch. (They can be



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frozen.) Humongous brownies, three and a half inches square and one and a half inches high, with or without walnuts, are $2 each. (They are easier to eat when quartered; look at it as fifty cents apiece.) Priscilla, 35 Jane Street, has chocolate turtles that are cracked and crusty on the outside, chewy on the inside, and also Little Rascals, which are butter-cookie-and-raspberry-jam sandwiches with a hole on top; seventy-five cents for either one. For breakfast, a round clump of seven sticky buns with pecans, raisins, and brown sugar can be peeled off as needed; $7.50. Sarabeth's, 423 Amsterdam Avenue (80th) and 1295 Madison Avenue (92nd), sells a loaf-shaped cake that can be frozen and tastes just as good when it's been unfrozen. It has a genoise layer on the top and sides, surrounding chocolate mousse. A loaf nine inches long will feed eight; $28. Her chocolate pudding (not a mousse) is a nursery dessert elevated to new heights, with whipped cream and chocolate shavings on top. It comes in a non-returnable jelly jar, with a lid supplied for takeout; $4. Sarabeth, always thinking of man's best friend, makes dog biscuits in two sizes, with and without dairy products, for twenty-five and fifty cents apiece.

Macy's has hired Gene Hovis as vice-president and creative director of The Marketplace and Restaurants. Mr. Hovis is a cook, an authority on traditional Southern cooking, and a food consultant par excellence. There's a whole new scene down in The Cellar. Old favorites of the Hovis kitchen are Maryland crab cakes ($5.95 each); bourbon-baked ham, with a thick glaze but no fruit or toothpicks ($5.95 a pound); buttermilk biscuits (thirty-five cents each); and pecan tart ($24.95). He transforms the ordinary with small surprises. Takeout, for example: the meat and the celery in the chicken salad are cut in long, flat strips, and the salad is flavored with crème fraîche, mayo, and vodka; $9.95 a pound. His curried shrimp salad has raisins, cashews, scallions, and pomegranate seeds, and the last add to the looks as well as the crunch; $19.95 a pound. A pound of roasted vegetables (red, yellow, and green peppers, eggplant, yellow and green squash) is $7.95. Featherstone Breads (Featherstone is an umbrella company that provides breads from top-notch bakers) sells huge round loaves of sourdough bread by weight for $35 to $45, and for $5 more it will personalize the crust in raised dough. Then, just for the hell of it, Mr. Hovis got someone named John Morisi to make blueberry and raspberry linguine, which Mr. Hovis assures us taste of the designated berry. (We were not about to try them.) He has reinstated a coffee-and-pastry-and-panini counter—mostly standup, but with a few stools for exhausted shoppers. The meat department is back, looking rosy and sparkling under the auspices of Ottomanelli's, and in a flyby we noticed that veal shank is only $6.95 a pound.

Eli Zabar, mastermind of E.A.T., 1064 Madison Avenue (81st), is in his Focaccia Period. The bread is served with or in almost everything except desserts: soup, salad, sandwiches, stuffing, Parmesan toast. Plain, it's $7 a pound; a quarter of a pound of Parmesan toast is $7.50. Eli has acquired a new toy—a rotisserie that revolves slowly in the back of the shop—on which he roasts capons ($30), ducks ($30), and small turkeys ($50). The results are succulent: the skin is crisp, the meat is moist. The duck is particularly good as a salad, mixed with chutney and served on a bed of greens with herbs and a tart vinaigrette: $7.50 a portion. Stuffed cabbage in a sweet-and-sour sauce served with dill and sour cream is the same price, and it can be frozen without harm. The prize among the sweets is Eli's Baby Linzer Stars—cookies the size of a fifty-cent piece. The cookie is a double-decker, higher than it is wide, with apricot- or raspberry-jam filling, and dusted with confectioners' sugar; $30 a pound, and there are forty or fifty pieces in a pound. Big spenders might consider the brioche loaf, with four ounces of fresh beluga caviar and a bone caviar spoon in a miniature mushroom basket; $125. (It can be shipped.)

Some more modest presents: The Cleaver Company makes a stollen that outclasses just about all others. It is S-shaped, has no icing, and is well worth a trip to Tribeca; $8 a pound, and it weighs nearly two pounds. Cleaver will also fill Christmas boxes (faux-Shaker) and cannisters with cookies or spiced nuts. A one-and-a-half-pound tin of assorted small cookies (gingerbread in different shapes, almond crescents, pecan squares, lemon spritzes) is $25. A pound of colorful mixed-grain pilaf (brown rice, wild rice, and wheat berries, with dried fruits and pecans) in a handsome glass jar is $12; in a plain brown wrapper it's $4.75. A similar jar of the Tipsy Fruit Sauce (plums, strawberries, and peaches marinated in vodka, then stewed with vanilla bean and sugar to a tart but mellow compote) is a rich red, and looks as good [illegible] it tastes; $20 for twenty-five ounces. Barocco Alimentari, at 297 Church Street (White), practically around the corner from the Cleaver Company, sells a black-olive spread, Frantoio Di Sant'Agata, that would improve almost any sandwich. Or it could just be eaten plain on bread. It will keep in the fridge for a month after it's opened; $25 for a whopping thirty-two-ounce jar. (It is also sold loose, by weight.) It might be presented with the store's homemade Tuscan bread, white or whole wheat ($3.50 a loaf), and while you're there be sure to load up with some of the shop's half-moon spinach ravioli filled with Swiss chard and ricotta. The flavor is excellent, and the edges are so thin there's no need to trim them; $12 a pound. Manhattan Fruitier, 210 East 6th Street, carries a fruitcake, made specially for it by Maureen Higgins, that is praised by fruitcake lovers and non-fruitcake lovers alike. It's made of currants, two kinds of raisins, apricots, dried cranberries, cherries (not Maraschino), toasted pecans, and walnuts, bound with apple and pear sauce and just enough flour to hold it together. It's then soaked in cognac and wrapped in cheesecloth, packed in brown cardboard boxes, and tied with wired French ribbon; $15 for three-quarter of a pound in an oblong box, $30 for [illegible] pound and a half in a round box. This shop's stock-in-trade is baskets of fresh fruit arranged as though posing for a still-life, and it also fills small redwood boxes with lady apples, jumbo dried figs, or jumbo prunes. A porcelain finial representing the fruit inside is on the lid of each box; $30 apiece, or $75 for three. Black Hound, 149 First Avenue (9th), makes delicious small cookies and chocolates, which also can be done up for gifts in Shaker-type boxes. Par-

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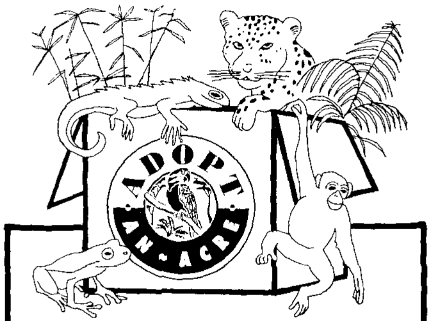
ticularly tempting are gingerbread boys and girls, $4.25 a quarter pound; and "number" butter cookies, 0 through 9, and palmiers made with brown sugar, both $3.75 a quarter pound. A pound box of assorted cookies is $19.50. A pound of round truffles in six different flavors of alcohol in a Shaker box is $27.50. Seven and a half ounces of square, non-alcoholic truffles, dusted with cocoa, in a redwood pencil box, are $16. A four-ounce tin of Sugar-Spice Pecans is $7.50.

Dean & DeLuca makes three worthy pâtés on the premises: a chicken with pistachio, and pork-and-veal with either wild mushrooms or dried cherries; $16 a pound. For Christmas, they can be had in either large or small terrines, with ribbon, for $30 and up. A third of an ounce of Urbani *tartufo* oil is just the right amount for a bowl of pasta, and, at $4, would make a nice little present either for a hostess or a stocking. In the sweets section, there are miniature marzipan fruits and vegetables that look like porcelain: two pears in a basket are $15; one apple in a basket is $8; a pumpkin patch is $25. Of course, they *can* be eaten, but a pound of snappy ginger cookies might go over better ($16). For home consumption, try the ravioli stuffed with porcini, and cook it an extra minute to soften up the edges; $14.50 a pound, and generous with the porcini. Giorgio was revved up over what he calls Crackerjackers. They are made by an Indian, and look like papadums, but are thinner and are eaten as is. There are five flavors: pepper, curry, cardamom, coffee, and coriander (which is green). They're $12 a pound, and a change from sweet munchies.

Never to be forgotten is Zabar's own Italian extra-virgin olive oil, a staple in many kitchens ($6.49 a litre), and this year Murray Klein (always on the brink of retirement but still whizzing around Zabar's in his red suspenders) recommended a white vinegar from Switzerland called Kressi. It's flavored with herbs, and, as usual with Mr. Klein's recommendations, the price is right: $4.98 a litre. In case anyone has been on Mars for three months, Terra Chips are "a delicious potpourri of exotic vegetables," most of which we have heard of: yam, parsnip, celeriac, taro (dyed with beet juice), sweet potatoes, yucca, batata, lotus. The chips are fried in peanut and canola oil, then lightly sprinkled with sea salt. They



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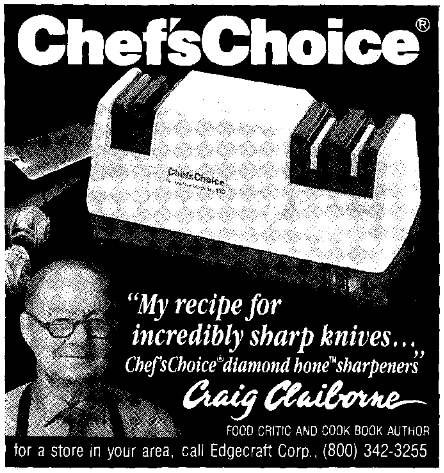

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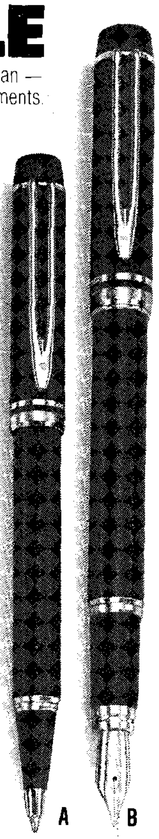

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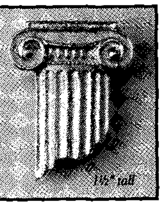

disappear in a trice. The prices fluctuate from store to store, but Zabar's sells a ten-ounce bag for $5.98.

When Vacherin disappeared from the cheese counters because of troubles, many people despaired of ever again eating a really good French cheese in this country. But lo, suddenly there are five noteworthy, legally imported French cheeses. Roucoulons is a French Camembert that can't be called Camembert in France, because it's made in the Franche-Comté, not in Normandy. How the makers of Roucoulons have managed to imbue a pasteurized cheese with the flavor and texture of the real thing is their secret and our luck; an eight-ounce round is $4.98. Briardin is a Brie-like cheese from Lorraine, made by Lincet. When you taste it alongside the pasteurized Bries, you realize what you've been missing; $7.49 a pound. Both cheeses are to be found at Zabar's, along with Brouère, a French Gruyère, the best kind of cheese for melting, which is $7.49 a pound. Zabar's also sells a Parmigiana Reggiano, made in 1988 from milk taken after August, when the milk is supposedly better, according to Olga, who has long presided over the cheese counter; $8.98 a pound. Dean & DeLuca carries Roucoulons and Briardin, and, in addition, has two tiny cheeses that are worth their weight in gold, which they might as well be made of. St.-Marcellin is the size of a very small hamburger patty, and costs $3.80. Cabecou, a farm goat cheese that is flat and maybe two inches square, is wrapped in two chestnut leaves and works out to $1.70 a mouthful. Steve Jenkins, maître fromager, who is now in charge of Dean & DeLuca's cheese department (by way of Fairway and Balducci's), says he loves these two cheeses so much that he sells them By Appointment Only. He suggests that they be accompanied by a Rhône. They are sensational.

Some items for freezer and shelf, to help get Mom through the Yuletide season: Perfect Edition puts up eight ounces of rich beef, chicken, and fish stock for $4.50 (beef) and $3.75 (chicken and fish). Summerfield Farm makes a concentrated veal stock—or glace de viande, as we say in France. You can get eight ounces for $10.95. All the above are cooked with spices and herbs, without salt or preservatives, and can be bought frozen at Grace's Marketplace, 1237 Third Avenue (71st), and Balducci's. Neuman & Bogdonoff makes a pastry log, a foot long, which is jam-packed with wild mushrooms and is sold frozen; about $7. A bag of six frozen chocolate disks, potential candidates for ice-cream sandwiches, is $4.50. Another emergency hors d'oeuvre, to keep in mind as an alternative to Terra Chips, is bhuna matar—roasted green peas with curry, cumin, and chili spices. They are crunchy and healthy, and don't clash with booze; $3.25 a pound at Spice & Sweet Mahal, 135 Lexington Avenue (28th). William Poll, 1051 Lexington Avenue (75th), makes a frozen crabmeat quiche, with plenty of crabmeat; $7.50 for an individual one (a generous portion), and $20 for one that would serve four. The spinach soup here, made with fresh lemon and no cream, comes frozen in glass jars and costs $8.50 a pint. For a pasta that is neither fresh-made nor frozen try Al Dente, a broad, flat fettucine available in just about every flavor except blueberry and raspberry. The wild-mushroom has a strong mushroom flavor, and the basil tastes of *fresh* basil. The tomato flavor is undetectable, but the pasta is a pretty color; twelve ounces for anywhere from $2.98 to $3.98 at Zabar's, Macy's, and Priscilla, among many other stores. The pizzas from David's, 1016 Second Avenue (53rd), have thin crusts and are made with fresh dough and fresh tomato sauce. Each pizza is baked to order, no slices. The basic model is tomato-mozzarella (a nine-inch for $6, a twelve-inch for $9), on top of which any number of delicacies can be piled, although the arithmetic can get tricky: onions, grilled zucchini, squash, peppers, eggplant, at $1 for any combo; pepperoni, mushrooms, sausage, niçoise olives, and cheese can be added for $1 each. The grilled-sausage pizza with niçoise olives and the special diet pizza ($6 and $9, made with shallots, grilled vegetables, fresh tomato) went over big with the Taste Squad, who know their pizzas, but the succès fou was the eggplant variation. David's will deliver ($10 minimum) free within running distance, and charges cab fare for all other areas. Telephone 888-1610.

Neuman & Bogdonoff (sit down for this one) makes its own marshmallows. They're square, and they're $5 a bag. Merry Christmas!

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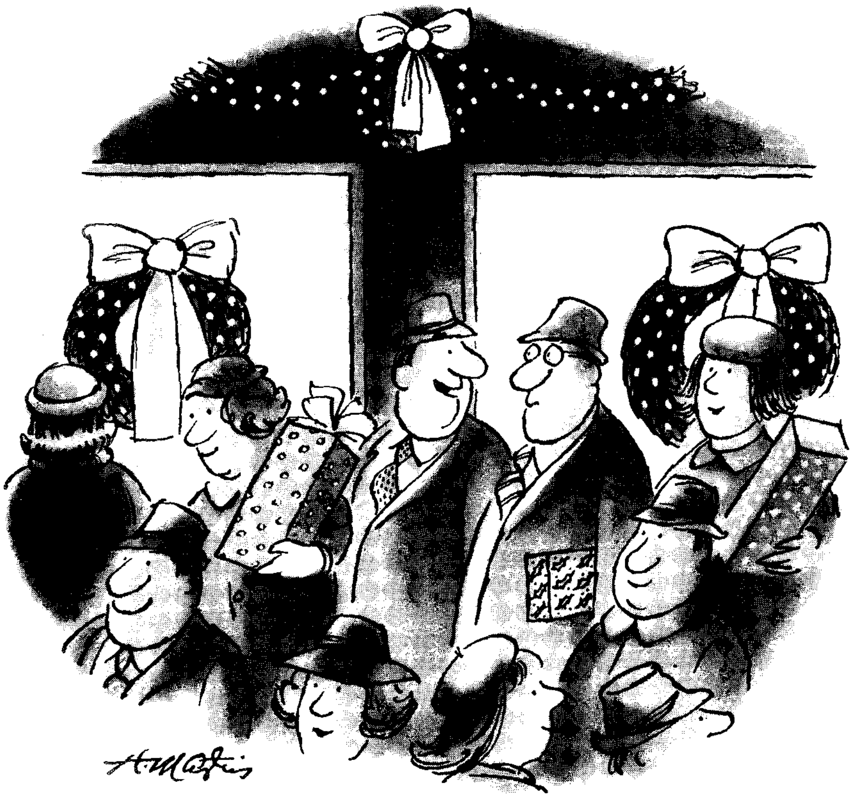

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THE THEATRE

Taking Liberties

TOWARD the end of the prologue that Brecht wrote for "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" but did not submit to his publishers (because, according to Eric Bentley, his appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee was imminent), the professional bard who has been hired to tell two feuding farm collectives the story of the Chalk Circle remarks, "Comrades, we hope you'll find that old poetry can sound well in the shadow of new tractors." Anyone who thinks that this line—or the whole prologue—would not sound so hot today might very well enjoy the version of "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" that's currently at the Public. Directed by George C. Wolfe—who wrote "The Colored Museum" and is one of Joe Papp's newly appointed associates—and performed by eleven black actors and one Hispanic, the production is uplifting and exhilarating in a way that New York Shakespeare Festival theatre hardly ever is: through simply showing a work to its best advantage and giving the audience a good time.

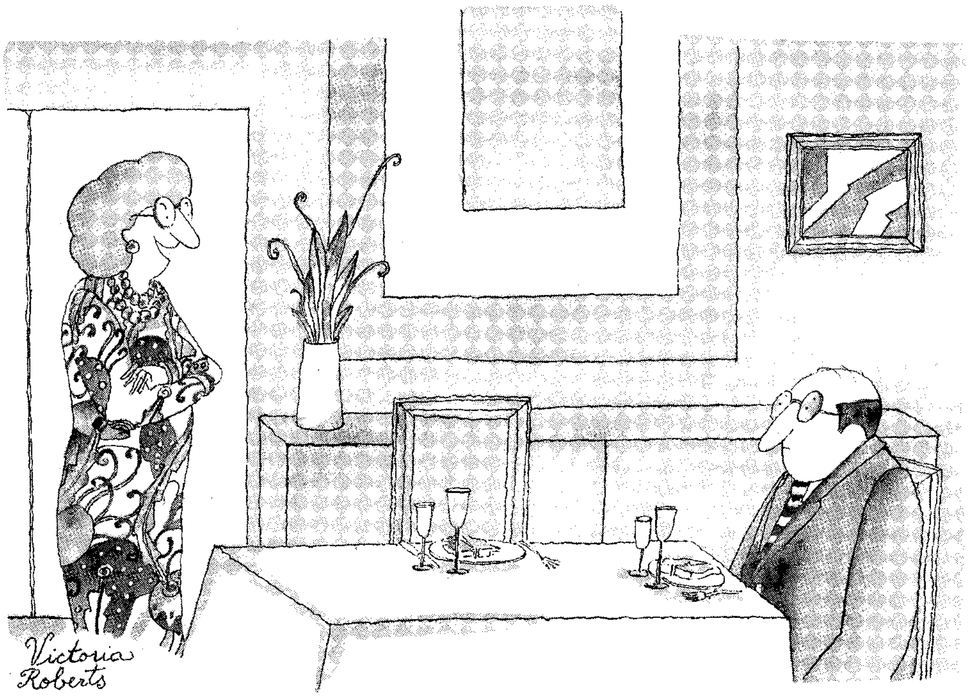
More than anything else I can remember seeing at the Public in recent years, in fact, this adaptation—by Thulani Davis, from a translation by William R. Spiegelberger—seems characterized by a kind of artistic good faith. This may sound strange, in view of the liberties Mr. Wolfe has taken: he has lopped off the prologue entirely, and has transplanted the whole story to present-day Haiti. Almost by definition, however, Brecht's theatre is such that it doesn't really matter where you set it, and in this case the choice of locality seems less a reference to the Duvalier regime than a way of providing a cultural context in which it makes sense to tell a story using the highly stylized form of theatre that Brecht called "epic" and we call "Brechtian," though we might just as easily call it "ancient" or "primitive." Mr. Wolfe uses a three-man West Indian band and a quantity of ingenious masks and puppets to tell Brecht's story of the peasant girl, Grusha, who rescues the child of the deposed governor during a palace uprising and refuses to give the baby up when the real mother presents herself.

The Caribbean setting allows Mr. Wolfe to play a very clever trick on Brecht, who, when the possibility of a Broadway production of "Chalk Circle" faded, rewrote the character of Grusha to make her less appealing. (He said he wanted a figure who "bore the stamp of the retarded development of her class.") In Wolfe's version, which casts Charlayne Woodard in the role, those aspects of Grusha's personality which Brecht might have intended as meanness or stupidity come across as "attitude." By robbing the play of its *élément soviétique*, Mr. Wolfe frees it from its programmatic constraints and comes up with a better story.

In Miss Davis's patois-laden adaptation, the Governor's Wife becomes Madame Le Gouverneur (Sharon Washington), the Grand Duke becomes Le Grand Blanc, the Singer *becomes* a Storyteller (Novella Nelson). In the role of the vaudevillian judge, Azdak—a sort of Dr. Quackenbush of the judiciary—Mr. Wolfe has cast Reggie Montgomery, a former clown, who plays the character with Groucho Marx mannerisms and an Alec Guinness lisp. The costume designer, Toni-Leslie James, has fitted him out with a coat-of-many-colors shawl, which Mr. Montgomery trips over with great fluency and regularity, and the shawl picks up the colors that dominate the production—bright shades of red and aquamarine, which are echoed on a paint-spattered pillar on Loy Arcenas's set, and in the harlequin ties that Luis A. Ramos and Cynthia Martells, playing a couple of lawyers in whiteface, wear with blue blazers.

The production takes a little while to get off the ground: the first twenty minutes or so seem more self-conscious than charming, and for a while there's a curious lack of music in the voices of the actors, who otherwise simulate Caribbean speech quite well. But then Fanni Green begins to take a more active part in things, and the others seem to pick up her cadences. At times, the play appears to be dominated by a matriarchal trio made up of Miss Woodard, Miss Nelson, and Miss Green, as the mother of the young man with whom Grusha enters into a marriage of convenience in Act I (she also does a marvellous drag turn as the policeman, Shauva, in Act II). But everyone gets a comic cameo or a moment in the sun, and Mr. Wolfe seems to bring out the best in his actors.

For years, the New York Shakespeare Festival has specialized in presenting versions of the classics that emasculate them by reducing them to the simplest political terms. Perhaps with Mr. Wolfe's help the theatre is



"It comes with a small Greek salad."

embarking on a new chapter: creating classics by emasculating agitprop theatre.

ELIZABETH DIGGS' play about Florence Nightingale, at the Vineyard Theatre—it's called simply "Nightingale"—is a sad disappointment, not least of all because the Vineyard is where "Goblin Market," another theatrical exploration of the nineteenth-century consciousness, began. A musical-theatre piece based on the Christina Rossetti poem, "Goblin Market" brought the modern sensibility of its authors, Peggy Harmon and Polly Pen, to bear on certain aspects of the Victorian imagination. Douglas Aibel, the artistic director of the Vineyard, has clearly gone to great pains in mounting the current production: directed by John Rubinstein and performed by a fourteen-member cast that includes Kathryn Pogson, Pippa Pearthree, Sloane Shelton, and James A. Stephens, it has expensive period costumes designed by James Scott, drawing-room dancing staged by Jane Lanier, and smoke-filled battle sequences, as well as an elegant set by William Barclay and lighting by Phil Monat (both of whom worked on "Goblin Market"). All this lends the enterprise an air of lavish professionalism, but nothing can alter the fact that Diggs' play amounts to the worst—i.e., the dullest—sort of hagiography.

The two women who adapted "Goblin Market" took toward their subject an approach something like the one George Wolfe took to Brecht: though acting in good faith out of a genuine love of the material, they weren't necessarily content with the way Rossetti might have viewed herself or her work. I'm not familiar with Miss Diggs' background (apparently, she's the recipient of several awards, grants, and commissions, including a 1988 Guggenheim and a 1989 N.E.A. playwriting fellowship), so I can't speculate on the source of her interest in Florence Nightingale. But, given Cecil Woodham-Smith's solid biography and the recent publication of Nightingale's letters, it is surprising to find Miss Diggs thinking on the level of a Young Adult biography. This is Florence Nightingale as visionary: friend-of-the-soldier and Lady with the Lamp, she talks with God and walks with God and is haunted by the ghosts of bloody soldiers. There's a certain amount of discussion about Flo's decision not to marry, though it never gets down to cases, and a certain amount about the tension between her and her mother (Miss Shelton) and her sister (Miss Pearthree), whom the playwright seems anxious to portray as some variety of neurotic, if only she could decide which. In order to explain Flo's preoccupation with God, Miss Diggs invents a nanny who sings a little hymn (the play rockets back and forth in time), but that is clearly pro forma: in this account all the conflicts in Nightingale's life come from the outside—from other women, or from members of the medical community determined to thwart her in her reforming zeal. When it comes to suggesting something about what sort of woman would want to call eighty thousand dying men her children or about what made her tick, Miss Diggs' play falls mute.

All the portraits of Florence Nightingale suggest that she was short and dark, with heavyish features. Still, I imagine that Miss Pogson, who is blond, wraithlike, and rather willowy, was cast less out of an impulse to romanticize than for the interesting line she's developed in portraying peculiar young women (in the Terry Gilliam film "Brazil" and in Wallace Shawn's "Aunt Dan and Lemon"). Unfortunately, the aura of peculiarity that Miss Pogson projects here is somewhat vague, and the rest of her energy is mostly spent on elocution—as is the case with most of the company. A surprisingly large proportion of the cast of "Progress" (the Doug Lucie play that Geoffrey Sherman directed at the Hudson Guild last year) seems to have been bused in for the occasion: Diana Van Fossen, John Curless, and Edmund Lewis. But only Mr. Curless and Mr. Lewis—since they aren't forced to play caricatures—manage to rise above the throng. As for Miss Pearthree, it's a torment seeing an actress of her calibre looking so thoroughly lost, but one can't blame her, any more than one can take exception to the bewilderment that begins to creep willy-nilly onto the faces of some of the cast when, for no reason at all, they're suddenly called upon to chant or burst into song.

—MIMI KRAMER

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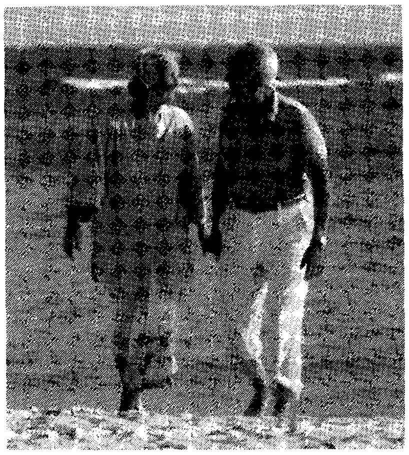

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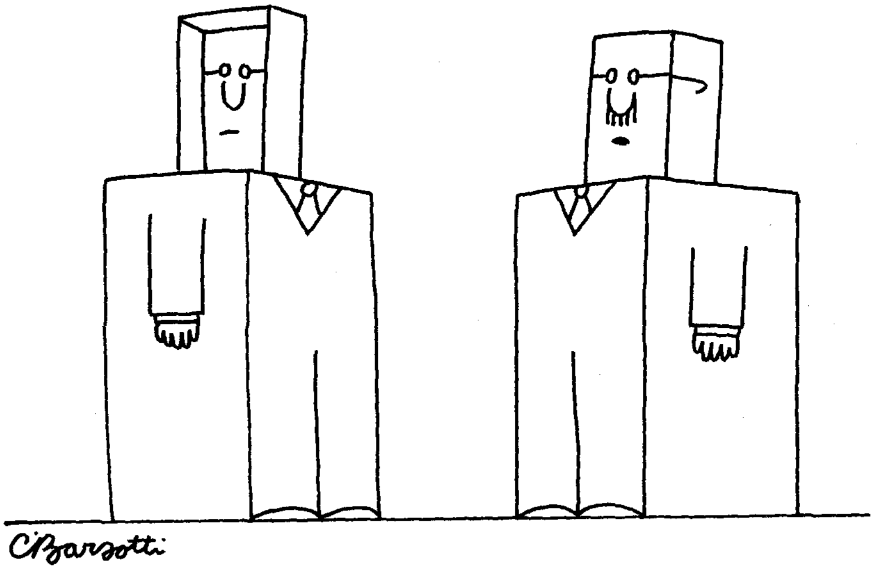
MUSICAL EVENTS

Middle Eastern Melodramas

Donizetti’s “Belisario,” a noble, stirring drama, was revived this month at Rutgers University. Composed in 1836, after “Lucia di Lammermoor,” it was Donizetti’s first big opera for Venice, the city of his early successes twenty years before, and his second collaboration with Salvatore Cammarano, the “Lucia” librettist. The plot is unconventional: the principals are a husband and wife and their son and daughter. (Cammarano told Verdi, when a “Rienzi” was under discussion, that he did not think romantic love an essential ingredient of lyric melodrama.) In Act I, Belisarius (the baritone), Justinian’s victorious general, returns in triumph to Byzantium (Cammarano keeps the old name). He magnanimously frees his prisoners, and is strangely attracted to one of them, Alamiro (the tenor), and adopts him as a foster son. (The two men are drawn by an affection that neither quite comprehends, and sing the nearest thing the opera holds to a love duet.) But then Belisarius—on charges trumped up by his wife, Antonina (the prima donna)—is accused of conspiracy and condemned to exile. Act II is short: a commiserative chorus; a tenor aria (its cabaletta the fiery, famous “Trema, Bisanzio”), in which Alamiro swears vengeance on the city that has wronged his friend; and a tender, extended duet in which Belisarius, now blinded, and his daughter, Irene (another soprano), prepare to face exile together. In Act III, they meet with rebel forces led by Alamiro; when it transpires that he is the general’s long-lost son, a moving family trio ensues. Back in Byzantium, Antonina has repented of her wickedness, and when Belisarius is borne in mortally wounded—he has routed the rebels and once again saved the city—she cries for forgiveness. At the sound of his wife’s voice, the hero stirs, but falls back dead before he can answer. She sings a final, remorseful aria.

This is excellently dramatic. The ties to classical drama are unconcealed: long before curtain rise, Belisarius sent his newborn son to death, because omens had declared the child to be, like Oedipus, a threat to the city; Antonina, another Clytemnestra, hates the husband who sacrificed a child to patriotic imperative, and has taken a lover during his long absence on war service; Irene, leading her blinded father into exile, is a new Antigone. Cammarano’s source was not (pace Grove) Marmontel’s dull “Bélisaire” (1766) but Eduard von Schenk’s tragedy “Belisar” (1826), an Italian version of which had been played in Naples; and the libretto—which he revised for Donizetti—had been his youthfully bold first essay at writing for the lyric stage. Donizetti responded with music of uncommon directness and beauty. “Belisario” dates from the years when he was closest in style to late Bellini—when, as Friedrich Lippmann has put it, “not of every scene, still less of every melody, could posterity, if it did not know, say whether Donizetti or Bellini had composed it.” Melodic beauty, formal inventiveness, and imaginative scoring combine, and there are several urgently Verdian passages. Verdi knew “Belisario” well; with Giuseppina Strepponi as Antonina, it was the opera that preceded “Nabucco” at La Scala. Belisarius launches the first-act finale in accents that anticipate Macbeth’s, and the Irene-Belisarius duet is emotionally, musically, and verbally a model for the daughter-father duet in “Luisa Miller” (which also has a Cammarano libretto).

The Rutgers performance was not good. I first heard “Belisario,” at Sadler’s Wells eighteen years ago, performed by ardent, fresh-voiced young students of the Royal Academy of Music, expertly directed. (David Rendall, three years before his Covent Garden début, was the tenor.) The Rutgers principals—three of them doctoral candidates—seemed older and less promising. Ronald Naldi, the Alamiro, had rhythmic energy in his delivery. Judith Burbank, the Irene, showed some feeling for her role. But Jacklyn Schneider’s Antonina was sometimes painfully out of tune, and Jerrold Pope’s Belisarius was mild, avuncular. Three factors beyond the singers’ control told against them. Two were perhaps inherent in the place of performance, the Nicholas Music Center: the music was undermined by a mechanical bourdon, a persistent hum from, presumably, the ventilation system; the orchestra was behind the stage, and the conductor, Michael Fardink, had no direct eye contact with the singers he accompanied. But, third, the score—which is not long—was severely cut. Nevertheless, the merits of “Belisario” were apparent. If this opera—best Donizetti, and once widely performed—has not been in the forefront of the Donizetti revival, a reason must be that the prima-donna role is not all-dominant. Maria Callas, Joan Sutherland, Montserrat Caballé did not take it up; a Venice revival in 1969, with Leyla Gencer, was coolly received. And prima donnas do much to determine the repertory. But the 1836 critic of the



“You’re being very silly, Louis. Arnold is not my favorite vice-president—you are all *my favorite vice-presidents.”*

Gazzetta Privilegiata di Venezia got things right: "Italian music gained a new masterpiece: 'Anna Bolena' found a worthy brother, and 'Belisario,' which Donizetti produced yesterday evening on the stage of the Fenice, not only pleased and delighted but conquered, inflamed, ravished the thronged auditorium. . . . No first performance in memory has had a more splendid, fuller, more solemn success."

THIRTEEN years earlier, Rossini had composed "Semiramide" for the Fenice. His last Italian tragedy, it was a majestic aggregate of what he had learned by producing Gluck, Mozart, and Spontini in Naples (with Isabella Colbran, now Mme. Rossini, the heroine), from his own adventurous Neapolitan scores, and from Haydn and Beethoven. It was also an opera to outdazzle Meyerbeer's rising star: Rossini worked with Gaetano Rossi, who four years earlier had written a "Semiramide" for Meyerbeer; Rossi reported to the German composer that for the new piece they were devising an "*introduzione alla Meyerbeer*—an imposing scene of pomp and spectacle." "Semiramide" is the most florid and the most forbidding of Rossini's operas. There are six elaborate set-piece arias: two for the mezzo, two for the tenor, and one each for the soprano and the bass. Four of them have choral participation. There are four extended duets: for mezzo and bass, soprano and mezzo, soprano and bass, soprano and mezzo again. There is a trio, a quartet (the heroine, like Beethoven's Leonore, enters as the second voice of a canon), and a quintet. Torrents of runs and roulades stream through the pages. The formal planning is on a large scale, but the ending is abrupt, almost perfunctory: a brief *preghiera* for the heroine, a brief, tense trio, a brief, jolly *coro*. The opera seems to need a fuller finale for a dying heroine, slain by her son, and Voltaire's "Sémiramis," the source of the libretto, has the matter for one ("Mon fils . . . je te pardonne" as aria, "Vivez, régnez heureux!" as cabaletta). Did Rossini decide that the opera was already far too long, or is the sudden change of scale a deliberate surprise stroke?

Back in 1919, Gustav Kobbé wrote, " 'Semiramide' seems to have had its day. Yet, were a soprano and a contralto, capable of doing justice to the rôles of Semiramide and Arsace, to appear in conjunction in the operatic firmament, the opera might be successfully revived, as it was for Patti and Scalchi." In 1962, "Semiramide" was revived at La Scala, with Miss Sutherland and Giulietta Simionato; in 1964, Miss Sutherland and Marilyn Horne sang the opera in Los Angeles and New York; since then it has been much performed, often with Mme. Caballé and Miss Horne. At the Met, however, the opera remained unheard from 1895 (with Melba and Scalchi) until it was revived last month. Four seasoned "Semiramide" principals, all American, were engaged: Lella Cuberli, Miss Horne, Chris Merritt, and Samuel Ramey. The performance was spaciously planned: cuts were small; some choruses, instrumental preludes, and extended scenes that are generally abridged were played at length.

But it was a long, dull four-hour evening, for the singers did not bring the work to life. If the vocal writing is not to seem an interminable sequence of elaborate, mechanical twiddles, "Semiramide" needs performers of charm and grace, vocal strength and beauty, dramatic fire and virtuoso prowess—singers who speak and "act" the florid language fluently, without strain. The Met performers struck few sparks of their own and seemed to have had little artistic guidance (save for Philip Gossett's supervision of extra embellishment). Miss Horne was fluent, though less exciting than of old (and concert performances suit her better than the stage); she had a sense of line, and her recitatives were strongly delivered. Mr. Ramey's firm, well-sustained tones gave much pleasure, but he sacrificed fleetness to volume. I have admired Miss Cuberli in other Rossini roles, but here, in her Met début, she was disappointing. She exercised no imperial command over the music; her tones lacked brightness, and her coloratura was imprecise. Mr. Merritt—in another Met début—alternated labored loudness with abrupt, unconvincing episodes of "applied" sensitivity. The tenor's role, that of a visiting Indian prince, is irrelevant to the drama, and if his arias—neither of them distinguished—are not elegantly sung they are probably better omitted.

Two half successes onstage, then. Not enough to make the old opera go. James Conlon's conducting was bland,

The small island of Dominica vs. "progress."

A person could embark, exactly like a wine connoisseur, upon a review of the "top notes" and the "finishes" of perfumes, after-shaves, colognes, skin bracers, arriving finally at the not uninteresting subject of pheromones, or human sexual attractants.

Relax. I do not intend to do so.

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inanimate, unfired by response to the composer's vivacity and force of invention, and the orchestra was unwontedly ragged. John Copley's staging was feebly decorative. John Conklin supplied a unit set of gilded frames receding to a small, variable backcloth, with crumbling masonry and shattered columns as motifs. Rossini's sharp-cut structure—three settings and three musical sequences in Act I, four in Act II—was blurred by a series of repetitive, might-be-anywhere scenes and half scenes, before curtains and shutters; the scenes tended to shift in mid-number. Semiramide entered her throne room on a lift, like a Wurlitzer organist. Michael Stennett had dressed the women after Winterhalter, and in Babylon they looked ridiculous. Gil Wechsler's persistently dim lighting threw a damper over all.

THE Washington Opera season opened with a distinguished production of "Salome"; at the Met, last year's new production of the opera was revived. It is tempting but would be unfair to essay a comparative review: the Kennedy Center house holds about two thousand people, the Met nearly twice as many; the Washington cast might sound less evidently superior in a monster auditorium.

The Washington production was Peter Hall's, first seen in Los Angeles four years ago, then taken to Covent Garden and to Chicago, and directed now by his assistant Jeannette Aster. Designed by John Bury, it is beautiful to behold—Gustave Moreau and Gustav Klimt play a part in it—and its actions are musically and theatrically precise. The Salome, Baptist, and Herod were those of the original production. In the title role, Maria Ewing, an American soprano in her prime, was a spellbinding presence. She looked beautiful, young, vulnerable—a spoiled, willful, but not wicked adolescent, Strauss's "sixteen-year-old . . . chaste virgin and oriental princess" impelled into tragedy by forces she cannot understand or control. Her dance was at once innocent and voluptuous; at its close, she did not fudge the usual titillating moment of nakedness but stood boldly nude, triumphant, holding the pose in full light. Her voice has grown, and it rang out in a hundred fascinating colors, soaring over the large orchestra. It is not conventionally even—Ljuba Welitsch and Birgit Nilsson sang the role with a fuller command through the registers—but Miss Ewing's subtle, electric voice-cum-words-cum-presence interpretation is wonderful. Michael Devlin, the Baptist, was a worthy adversary, romantic of tone, neurotic and fervent of utterance, ivory-limbed, physically and vocally alluring in a way that made sense of Salome's behavior. Ragnar Ulfung's Herod was brilliantly clear and exact. Joyce Castle's Herodias, a shade crude, struck the only provincial note. The smaller parts were carefully cast and were well sung. Gerard Schwarz's conducting was impetuous without being obtrusive.

The Met revival, with a new Salome and Baptist, was less remarkable. The opera turns on its heroine—it is well-nigh a dramatic concerto for soprano with orchestra and supporting cast—and Hildegard Behrens, who with élan once recorded the piece for Karajan, no longer commanded it with her old force. In her double declutching to change registers many little notes disappeared. Mr. Wechsler's soft lighting left her largely in shadow, and the result, though perhaps tactfully intentioned, was kin to that of muting the solo instrument in a concerto. Ekkehard Wlaschiha, a stolid, unromantic Baptist swathed from neck to ankle in flowing white, stood and blared. Richard Cassilly's Herod was excellent. Helga Dernesch's Herodias was eye-catching and ear-catching—self-servingly so when her added cackles and cries swivelled attention off whoever was singing. I admired Nikolaus Lehnhoff's production—set in the underbelly of a rich society, in the boiler-room basement of Trump Tower, as it were—when it was new and everything made sense. In the loose, unfocussed revival, it seemed to matter more that Salome, instead of entering "agitated" during her entry music, simply appeared on a balcony and sang; that Herodias came on many bars too early, usurping a Salome theme to do so; that some bit-part players, eyes fixed on the conductor, made it their first concern to boom out as impressively as possible into the huge house. Mr. Conlon conducted, and the orchestra played well. As in "Semiramide," everything was scrupulously and neatly beaten out. The result was tame, unexcited.

—ANDREW PORTER

THE CURRENT CINEMA

New Age Daydreams

A FRIEND of mine broke up with his woman friend after they went to see "Field of Dreams": she liked it. As soon as I got home from "Dances with Wolves," I ran to the phone and warned him not to go to it with his new woman friend. Set during the Civil War, this new big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is about how the white men drove the Native Americans from their land. But Kevin Costner, who directed "Dances with Wolves" and stars in it, is not a man who lets himself be ripped apart by the violent cruelty of what happened. He's no extremist: it's a middle-of-the-road epic. Lieutenant Dunbar (Costner), a Union officer, sees that the Sioux have a superior culture—they're held up as models for the rest of us—and he changes sides. Costner must have heard Joseph Campbell on PBS advising people to "follow your bliss." This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head.

Once our hero has become an Indian, we don't have to feel torn or divided. We can see that the white men are foulmouthed, dirty louts. The movie—Costner's début as a director—is childishly naïve. When Lieutenant Dunbar is alone with his pet wolf, he's like Robinson Crusoe on Mars. When he tries to get to know the Sioux, and he and they are feeling each other out, it's like a sci-fi film that has the hero trying to communicate with an alien race. But in this movie it's the white men who are the aliens: the smelly brutes are even killing each other, in the war between the North and the South. Luckily, we Indians are part of a harmonious community. Dances with Wolves has never seen people "so dedicated to their families." And he loves their humor.

At the beginning, there's a bizarre Civil War battle sequence with the wounded Lieutenant Dunbar riding on horseback between rows of Union and Confederate soldiers, his arms outstretched, welcoming bullets in a Christlike embrace, and throughout the movie he is brutalized, seems dead, but rises again. (Does getting beaten give Costner a self-righteous feeling? Even when it's as unconvincingly staged as it is here?) There's nothing really campy or shamelessly flamboyant after the opening. There isn't even anything with narrative power or bite to it. This Western is like a New Age social-studies lesson. It isn't really revisionist; it's the old stuff toned down and sensitized.

Costner and his friend Michael Blake, who worked up the material with him in mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay, are full of good will. They're trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view. And it's that sympathy for the Indians that (I think) the audience is responding to. But Costner and Blake are moviemaking novices. Instead of helping us understand the Sioux, they simply make the Sioux like genial versions of us. The film provides the groovy wisdom of the Sioux on the subjects of peace and togetherness: you never fight among yourselves—you negotiate. Each of the Indian characters is given a trait or two; they all come across as simpleminded, but so does the hero. Even the villains are endearingly dumb, the way they are in stories children write.

There's nothing affected about Costner's acting or directing. You hear his laid-back, surfer accent; you see his deliberate goofy faints and falls, and all the closeups of his handsomeness. This epic was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) You look at that untroubled face and know he can make everything lightweight. How is he as a director? Well, he has moments of competence. And the movie has an

Friends often dropped by and subjected Sir Isaac to a little good-natured ridicule.

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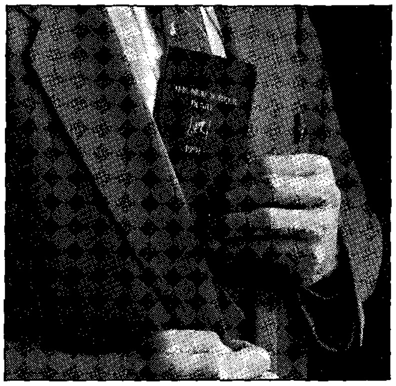

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authentic vastness. The wide-screen cinematography, by Dean Semler, features the ridges, horizons, and golden sunsets of South Dakota; it's pictorial rather than emotionally expressive, but it's spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by.

Mostly, the action is sluggish and the scenes are poorly shaped. Crowds of moviegoers love the movie, though—maybe partly because the issues have been made so simple. As soon as you see the Indians, amused, watch the hero frolicking with his wolf, you know that the white men will kill it. Maybe, also, crowds love this epic because it's so innocent: Costner shows us his bare ass like a kid at camp feeling one with the great outdoors. He's the boyish man of the hour: the Sioux onscreen revere him, because he's heroic and modest, too. TV interviewers acclaim him for the same qualities. He's the Orson Welles that everybody wants—Orson Welles with no belly.

IN Tim Burton's "Edward Scissorhands," the towers and spires of a medieval castle rise high in the air right out of the end of a bare, flat suburban street. The houses and cars in the suburbs are in a comically limited palette of pastels; the dark castle is extravagantly junky and macabre, like the setting of an old horror movie seen on a black-and-white TV. The amiable suburbanites, cozy in their little square rooms (with very small windows), see the castle whenever they look up the street—its tangled shrubs and statues and fallen stones are a gothic, Expressionist playground—but they hardly seem to notice it. They refer to it casually and without curiosity as "the mansion."

One day, Peg Boggs, the Avon lady (Dianne Wiest), in her swing-skirted lavender suit and pillbox hat, having exhausted the sales possibilities among her regular customers in the neighborhood, sees the castle in her car mirror and thinks she'll give it a try. She pokes about the deserted, tumbledown place and is about to leave when a voice says, "Don't go." It's an adolescent boy, white-faced Edward (Johnny Depp), who looks like a somnambulist in a German silent. He has a snarled mop of spiky black hair, melancholy circles around his eyes, and a tiny Cupid's-bow mouth. It takes a second to register that the welts on his face are self-inflicted accidental cuts. Edward was created in the castle's kitchen workshop by an aged inventor (Vincent Price, in flashbacks), who gave him a gigantic cookie-cutter heart but died before he could attach the hands he had prepared. Orphaned, Edward is left by himself with two collections of long, sharp shears dangling where his hands should be. Peg, ever the professional, dabs at his cuts with astringent from her sample case, as if he'd cut himself shaving, and she tries to put a little color on his cheeks. Worrying and motherly, she feels she can't go back down the street and leave this polite, forlorn teen-ager, who spends his time whacking away at the shrubbery, cutting out topiary animals. She invites him to come home with her.

Johnny Depp's Edward is a fairy-tale boy: he's like Harry Langdon playing Cesare in "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari"; he's like Frankenstein's monster by way of L. Frank Baum. But the Boggs family accepts him as if he were an ordinary guest in the house. Peg's husband (Alan Arkin)—a real fifties-style dad—is the perfect host; he makes the boy feel wanted. And the assorted suburban matrons welcome him. Gratefully he transforms their hedges into mythical creatures, and when they see his skill at trimming a poodle he's turned loose on their hairdos. They treat him as a minor celebrity and prepare to set him up in a salon. Suburbia is a form of surreal entertainment here: the physical layouts have an element of surprise; the score, by Danny Elfman, has an antic sweep to it. And you develop an affection for the residents because they make you laugh. But Edward falls swooningly in love with Peg's daughter (Winona Ryder), whereupon her vengeful boyfriend (Anthony Michael Hall) tricks him into a robbery, and the suburbanites, thinking he's dangerous, turn against him. And everything sours. We don't want to see the conventional "dark side" of these people: it's a betrayal of the film's comic spirit—the material turns into cheesy plot-centered melodrama.

There's something deeper the matter with "Edward Scissorhands": the central idea of a boy who cuts when he wants to touch. It has no mystery: it's pre-interpreted. And Tim Burton is being too personal, too tenderly self-serving. Edward is the pure creative artist, who can't be around people, because he can't help hurting them. He's the person who can't reach out, can't communicate, can't express his love. He's the woeful misunderstood kid.

A draftsman director, Burton (he's thirty-two) is the most original of the younger moviemakers. His comic-book films—"Pee-wee's Big Adventure," "Beetlejuice," "Batman"—are all conceived graphically, and their hipster, exploding-cigar funkiness isn't fully explicable. "Scissorhands" is conceived graphically, too, but it's plaintive, and it doesn't seem to want to be more than that. Burton shows us the pale, lonely kid who feels there's no place for him. ("Scissorhands" suggests a picture he might have wanted to do when he was still a teen-age animator.) This representation of his interior life has to be only one part of it: where's the part that put the demon Beetlejuice on the screen and let loose the Joker? That's the interior Burton some of us want to see, not the droopy one who says, "I've always been a sweet guy." Johnny Depp's Edward is an emasculated Tim Burton. Edward isn't angry even when he's mistreated; his scissor hands have no relation to his mild, angelic nature.

A great script might have done something with the vision of Transylvania looming over suburbia. Burton has said that the gothic-movie world helped him get through childhood. Are the suburbanites completely cut off from it, as they seem to be? (Then what's it doing there?) The script, written by Caroline Thompson, based on Burton's sketches and the story the two of them devised, is undernourished. The movie is a tribute to the seventy-nine-year-old Vincent Price; it could have used more interaction between the inventor and Edward, and some suggestion of what the boy was intended for. (With those whirling, rhythmic shears, he should have become a film editor.)

There's one magical performance: Dianne Wiest's Peg pushes open the huge castle door, saying brightly, "Hello! Avon calling!"—Gracie Allen couldn't have done it with more radiant daffiness. As a comedienne, Wiest is like a more accessible Maggie Smith; you delight in her tidy gestures and wordplay. You *like* her being an Avon lady: Peg is daintily stylized—living kitsch.

But when the picture stops being

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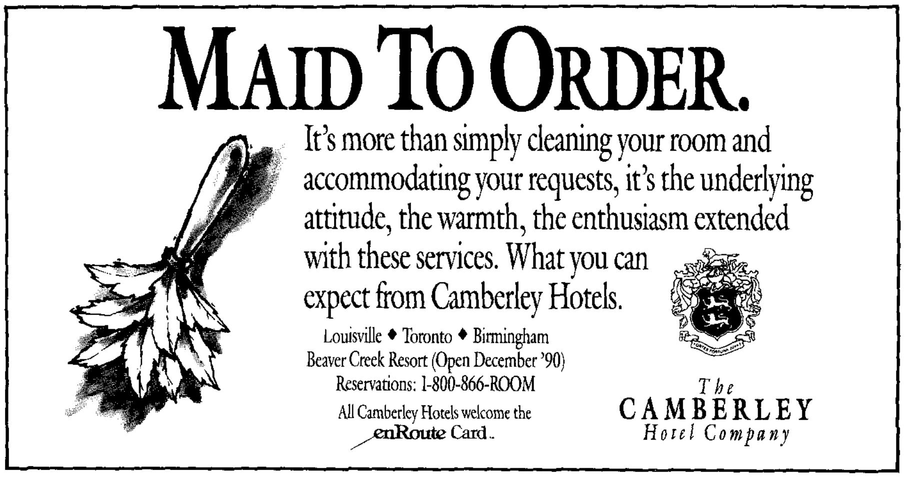
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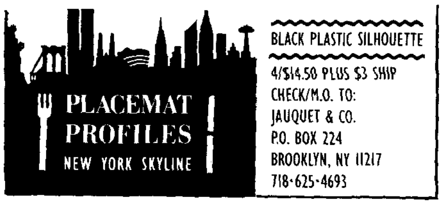
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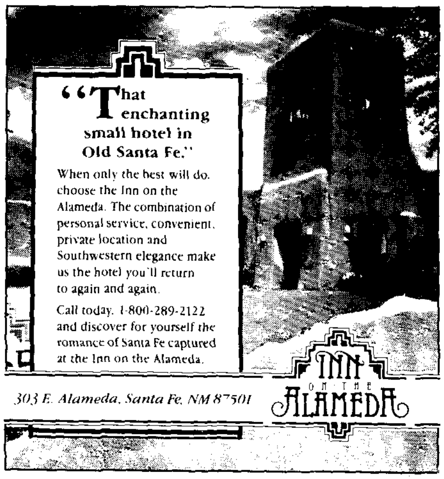
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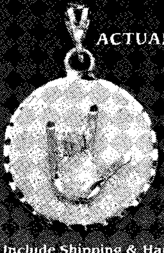

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comic it turns into a different kind of kitsch. "Scissorhands" is very Christmassy, and it's likely to be greeted by a congratulatory press—the kind that says, "At last, Tim Burton shows us what's in his heart." Well, the terms in which it will be praised should tell him what's wrong with it. Beetlejuice would have spit in this movie's eye.

IT used to be said of the composer-writer Paul Bowles and his playwright wife, Jane, that he was afraid of nothing and she was afraid of everything. That was before he published his first novel, "The Sheltering Sky," which seems an elaboration of the remark. The 1949 book was his semi-autobiographical account of their marriage—an account that fascinated readers by its Olympian closeted tone. Under the novel's vaporousness is a pop theme: what happens to a modern, dissatisfied woman—a New York artist-intellectual—if she's in the Sahara, her husband dies, and she's enslaved in a harem? She loves it and hates it; she goes mad. But this is not simply a male writer's version of a woman's harem-whore fantasy: the wife, Kit, seems to be fulfilling the nature and desires that the husband, Port, cannot fulfill for himself.

Bowles is so private he doesn't let you in on much. Reading the book, you can't tell who is who sexually; stonewalling is Bowles' literary art. But the novel attracted directors the way Malcolm Lowry's "Under the Volcano" did. Movie people talked about it with awe (Robert Aldrich, Nicolas Roeg, and Mick Jagger were among those who thought of filming it), and when Bernardo Bertolucci got caught up in it he must have been awed, too. His new "The Sheltering Sky" filters out the pop element that gives the book its bit of kicky horror.

Tall, blond Port (John Malkovich), powerfully built, has a creamy voice, a soft pout, and slightly weaving hips. It's the postwar era, and Kit (Debra Winger), his wife of ten years, wears her dark curly hair cropped but piled high on her forehead—she looks like a fashionable illustrator's idea of a spunky lesbian. They're so close a couple they're almost a single person, yet they're unhappy, petulant, snagged. They're *one* person, but they're also isolated from each other. Even on the rare occasions when they have sex together, there's no passion in it. Most days, they can only quarrel. Port feels that they'll never be in synch, that he wants them to reach the country of the unconscious but Kit holds back. So they go on journeys from the decaying known to the scary unknown with a third person along as a buffer. On the 1947 trip that the film covers, it's rich, handsome, dull Tunner (Campbell Scott). His attentions to Kit give some sexual edge and jealousy to the married pair, and his presence binds them closer; he doesn't have their style, and they treat him as a clod. They're a nasty, brittle pair, strangling in their style.

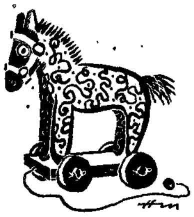
Crossing boundless landscapes, the three go from Oran, in Algeria, to remote villages in the Sahara, because Port believes in testing himself; he likes rigors and danger, likes the idea of fearlessness. (It's his special arrogance; it's part of his narcissism to see himself as an adventurer.) He takes long night walks in unlighted alleyways and (rather risibly) lets a pimp steer him to a thieving Arab girl in a tent. Kit, hugging her hotel rooms and looking at her luggage for reassurance, lets herself be seduced by Tunner. Sneakily, Port contrives to get rid of him, and the couple, alone, go farther into the boredom of the desert. We wait and wait for all this trekking by train and car and bus to start paying off, but what Bertolucci and his cinematographer, Vittorio Storaro, give us is flies, squalor, and dunes. ("The Sheltering Sky" won't do a lot for North African tourism.) Eventually, with Kit watching over him but helpless to save him, Port succumbs to typhoid.

In Bowles' account (as I make it out), Port dies giving birth to Kit's sexuality, and she becomes him. Fearlessly, fatalistically, she goes into the desert at night, joins a caravan of merchants, and is raped repeatedly by a crude, feudal old Tuareg tribesman and a younger Tuareg, who turns her into his chattel. Bowles' description appears to be his own fantasy of what the hypercivilized Kit—and Port—really want. Kit's (Port's) madness is a sexual version of the Heart of Darkness. The novel is a horror fantasy, like Bowles' most famous short story, the 1945 "A Distant Episode," about a French professor of linguistics who comes to North Africa to study desert dialects: nomads cut out his tongue, dress him in tin cans, and make him dance like a clown. In that story (which prefigures the novel), the professor goes mad—he becomes the nomads' clown. Bowles' "The Sheltering Sky" is high-toned sensationalism; by the end, it has turned into pulp exotica—the alienated intellectual's version of Valentino's "The Sheik."

In the movie, all this is muffled. Bertolucci doesn't make any big alterations, but the attenuated story becomes even more attenuated, and after Port's death there's no suspense, no drama. When Kit goes farther into the desert, you may think the movie is about changing time zones, and, essentially, you're right. The older rapist is left out, and we don't feel the fullness of Kit's sexual release, or the fullness of her debasement when she's one of the women in the seraglio. She's never raped: the young Tuareg is a tender lover. What we get is too affectless to be a sex fantasy; affectlessness itself is the point.

In the novel, Kit becomes all about sex; the movie is about her giving over to another way of seeing. There may be nothing the matter with that, except as a viewing experience. The picture goes deep into monotony. Bertolucci has lost interest in pace and excitement and verve. He's up to something moral: he's looking outside Western culture, hoping for an erotic tranquillity—something abstract, like Islamic art, that will keep you fixated, not moving.

Would I like the movie better if Bertolucci had put in the novel's cheap thrills? You bet I would. I might have laughed at the trashiness, but that's better than feeling apathetic. I don't respect his choice of this material, but, having chosen it, he might have tried to get at the high-risk desire to be overpowered, instead of filling the closet with sand and art. The whole thing has the impressively decadent look of an Armani ad. Storaro is Storaro. His cinematography is lovely but unsurprising—in truth, a little stale. (The graceful camels might be the same ones who posed for him in "Ishtar.")



Port isn't simply a repressed homosexual; he's also a repressed heterosexual. He's a furtive, skunky aesthete, a man of no generous impulses—our worst self-image of white civilization. Bertolucci and his co-scriptwriter, Mark Peploe, have given Port a gloating moment when, after his session with the Arab prostitute, he holds up the wallet that she thinks she has effectively made off with. He has been contentedly nuzzling her ripe melon breasts, but he has to show her he has outmaneuvered her, even though that gives her time to make the shrill, trilling cry that alerts her protectors. (Perhaps Port wants to be chased.) The ingenious Malkovich brings new character textures to the screen: Port is full of smug self-hatred.

Winger takes on a definite resemblance to the iconic photographs of Jane Bowles, but what's the point when the makeup and hairdo aren't attractive on her? (Most people will just think she's losing her looks.) Winger speaks as if she were reading; she never seems to get the hang of the character. (Maybe nobody could, or maybe it would take someone like the young Katharine Hepburn.) Except for a bit of derisive mimicry of Tunner, Winger seems to have nothing to play until Port is feverish and dying. Then she can show hysterical anxiety; it's as if she suddenly dipped into surplus emotions from earlier roles.

At the beginning of the picture, we see that Kit has packed "Nightwood" in her bag. That's about a woman who becomes a dog; here she becomes a zombie. When Kit joins the caravan, rides a camel, and is on her way to becoming a contented love slave, we gauge how long she's en route by the phases of the moon. Her movement into the desert night seems to be intended as a rebirth. (By the time the caravan reaches its destination, she looks like a winsome, dark-skinned Arab boy. Or is it Port who has come out as a homosexual?) The moon phases in the deep-blue desert sky are charmingly cartoonish, but probably the mocking tone isn't intended. (It may be something that happens when Bertolucci gets consciously poetic, as in his 1979 "Luna.") Once Kit is part of the caravan, we're meant to feel that there has been a shift in her psyche. Bertolucci signals us that she has moved away from the verbal, from definitions and categories, by giving us a long, silent passage (though he keeps the trance music—the drums and flutes—going). She has achieved Port's goal: the country of the unconscious.

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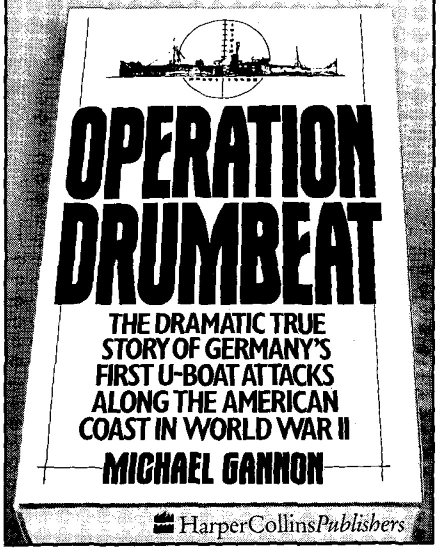
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inhabitants as primal. Rolling benignly on their camels' backs, the tribesmen are themselves New Agey. We're led to believe that they're not neurotic, like Port, or dull, like Tunner. (In this view, the nomads don't have to strive to be unconscious; it's their heritage.) The seventy-nine-year-old Bowles has been enlisted to play some sort of presiding expatriate sage; he's like the zombie master when he looks into Kit's gray-blue eyes and asks her, "Are you lost?" As I interpret the movie, the wandering Kit, thrown out of the seraglio, may be lost but she isn't mad: *having been transmuted, she's drawn to* anonymity and impersonality. You're left with the impression that she'd rather be a nameless whore in some Casbah than return to the New York heebie-jeebies.

Bertolucci thought about the Paul Bowles novel so much it disintegrated. If he had filmed "A Distant Episode," he might have presented the insane professor of linguistics (who remained in the desert) as having made a sound political choice. I'm pushing it, of course; I'm trying to indicate that the sensibilities of Bowles and Bertolucci simply don't fit together.

Just as Bertolucci and his co-writer Peploe suggested in "The Last Emperor" that forced reëducation—Communist brainwashing—had saved Pu Yi's soul, so now they propose that Kit's blanking out is a form of cultural *cleansing*, and that her being used for nothing but sex (like a trained pet: a dog?) is sexual liberation. I hope I'm wildly overinterpreting this movie, because if I'm not, Bertolucci has become a caricature of the Western intellectuals who reject Western values. And at the same time that he's telling us how decadent we are he's making this overscaled, sensuous, sumptuous fantasy that looks as if it's about Lawrence of Arabia's sex life.

I BECAME ill last January, just as I was about to praise "Everybody Wins," in which Debra Winger went further with the kind of liquid acting that made audiences at "An Officer and a Gentleman" stare at her and smile with pleasure. Practically no one saw her performance in "Everybody Wins," or even heard of it, because the thriller, directed by Karel Reisz from a surprisingly cool, quirky Arthur Miller screenplay, was opened without press screenings and was generally taken for a dud. It disappeared almost instantly and hasn't returned, but it's available on tape, and I wouldn't want to let the year close without urging you to see it, and shouting that, despite "The Sheltering Sky," Winger is one of the two or three finest (and most fearless) screen actresses we've got.

"Everybody Wins" is set in a (fictional) small, decaying industrial city in New England. (The exteriors were shot in Norwich, Connecticut.) A prominent doctor has been murdered, and his young nephew has been convicted for the crime. Winger plays a local girl, a seductive sometime hooker named Angela Crispini, who persuades a private investigator, an outsider (played by Nick Nolte), *to look into the* case. She claims that the youth is innocent and that "everybody" knows who the real killer is. The movie asks, What's going on? Why have the town officials conspired to convict the wrong man?

The mood-swinging Angela is the chief mystery: Can anything she says be believed? She's always acting things out on a stage of her own creation. She's out of control, and Winger makes her irrationality passionately real. Winger's Angela is soft and boneless and appealingly whory, with an automatic pretty smile. She wears slips and has breakdowns; she's all femininity and formlessness—she can become anything at any time. (The director seems to let the actress set the film's rhythms.) Winger warms up her voice: it's less husky than usual—more maternal. Her sexuality is never hyped; she doesn't have to prove it—it's just there. Angela's switches of personality seem natural and defensive; she gets haughty and temperamental whenever she's challenged.

You can see why the investigator—Tom O'Toole, a former Boston cop—becomes her lover and her patsy. He's the literal-minded male who wants to know what's going on. She's maddening: she behaves in contradictory ways, and he can't pin her down. She keeps him off balance and in a courting position. Nolte, playing a lapsed Catholic, wears a trim beard and has the shaggy bangs of a Richard Burton priest; Tom is tenderhearted and inexperienced—a lug. Drawn into an erotically charged game, he always catches on to Angela's emotional manipulations too late. Angela is as anxious and deceitful and bewildering as Marilyn Monroe. Arthur Miller has lived in Connecticut a long time and has carried Monroe in his head a long time. Writing this script, he put together his exterior life and his interior life—his "An Enemy of the People" consciousness and his Marilyn Monroe problem—and they fuse in a way that cures him of rectitude. This may be the least prosecutorial writing he's ever done. When Tom asks Angela what her interest in the case is and she rattles on, saying things like "Everything's just one step away from a dream," she's avoiding his question, but her likably odd cadences tell us that she's also answering it.

For a brief period in the late sixties and early seventies, moviegoers seemed willing to be guided through a movie by their intuition and imagination; if this slyly funny picture about the spread of corruption had been released then, it might have been considered a minor classic. It's satirical in an odd, hallucinatory way. There are fresh (often startling) scenes, with Frank Military as the kid who's falling apart in prison and becoming suicidal; with Kathleen Wilhoite as a stoned girl whose mentor (Will Patton) knuckles her on the head when she tries to join a conversation, and then comforts her; with Frank Converse as the State's Attorney; with Judith Ivey as Tom's sister; and with Jack Warden as a retired federal judge. (And Nolte, in his priestly mode, has a fine, tense scene in which he persuades the killer to confess.) Except for the innocent kid, practically every male character we meet has had carnal relations with Angela. By the end, we know why she has to save him: she's tormented by her sense of justice. It may be her only torment that she can do anything about. The picture is a classically constructed detective story, with a mysterious woman who lures the fact-oriented man into something that ramifies in every direction and is way over his head. (But he's dogged.) Maybe the only reason Winger's performance hasn't been hallowed is that it hasn't been seen.

—Pauline Kael

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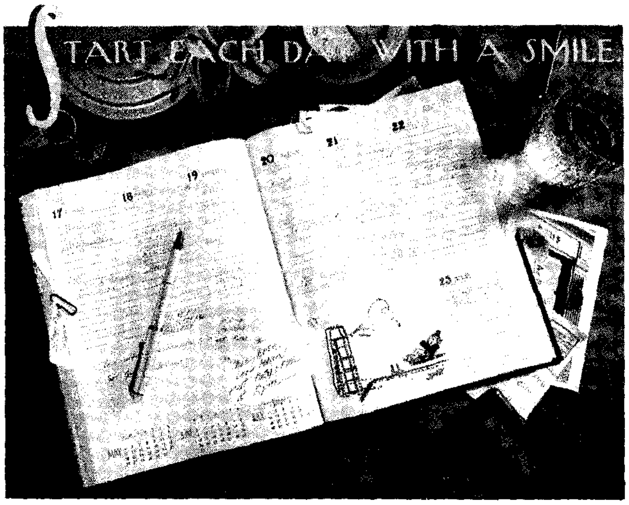

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THE NEW YORKER

LISTS AT THIS SEASON SOME BOOKS BY ITS CONTRIBUTORS PUBLISHED DURING THE YEAR

(All or a considerable part of the contents of each of these volumes first appeared in this magazine.)

Looking for a Ship, by John McPhee (*Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $18.95*).

The ever alert Mr. McPhee puts out to sea on the S.S. Stella Lykes and reports on the romantic ways and dwindling means of the United States Merchant Marine. We learn that the best watch is the four-to-eight (so you see the sunset and the sunrise), that the hold contains everything from chicken vitamins to button-down shirts, that today's pirates carry walkie-talkies and bolt-cutters, and that the pleasure of the author's adventure consisted largely in getting to know the able-bodied golfers and preachers and ex-social-studies teachers who made up the crew.

Lantern Slides, by Edna O'Brien (*Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $18.95*).

These are mostly stories of rural Catholic Ireland, set in small towns whose inhabitants, their lives thick with bitterness, rail against the misdeeds of others and exult in misfortune. The final story, however—both homage and answer to Joyce's "The Dead"—is of a grand party on the outskirts of Dublin, which stirs up for the guests "memory upon memory, like hands placed on top of one another in a childhood game."

Profiles, by Kenneth Tynan (*HarperCollins, $29.95*).

Fifty biographical essays of assorted sizes and weights, written between 1943 and 1980, the year of Mr. Tynan's death. Their common theme is, to quote Simon Callow's introduction, "Life as a Performance." Most of the performers herein are theatrical, and the book is, in a sense, a manual for the stagestruck. It concludes with five celebrated Profiles: of Ralph Richardson, actor; Nicol Williamson, actor; Tom Stoppard, playwright; Mel Brooks, comedian; and Louise Brooks, star of silent movies.

The Experience of Place, by Tony Hiss (*Knopf, $19.95*).

This book urges us to pay closer attention to the experiences provided by our environment—whether it be Times Square or a freshly tilled field. Examining possibilities for future preservation and development, the author explores a wide range of disciplines (psychology, filmmaking) and landscapes (Long Island's vineyards, Frankfurt's shopping district). But most important to Mr. Hiss is that we ask the question "How does this place make me feel?" and that we learn to act collectively on the answers we receive.

Lucy, by Jamaica Kincaid (*Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $16.95*).

Far from home but far from intimidated, Lucy is a nineteen-year-old from a small Caribbean island who comes to the States as an au pair for a lawyer and his wife and children. She finds that she has come with a full set of convictions on every matter, from kissing to world conquest; these convictions seem forced into bloom by the change of weather, like the daffodils she is pained to confront for the first time. The novel's five chapters appeared as stories in *The New Yorker.*

The Journalist and the Murderer, by Janet Malcolm (*Knopf, $18.95*).

In 1983, the best-selling author Joe McGinniss published "Fatal Vision," a true-crime story about an Army doctor accused of slaughtering his family. The doctor then sued McGinniss for breach of contract and fraud, and—despite the fact that he had been convicted of the murders—he found a sympathetic jury. Conflicting versions of these events are given by reporters, psychiatrists, lawyers, and jurors; in her analysis of their stories Ms. Malcolm leads the reader through a labyrinth of seduction and betrayal.

The Rain Came Last & Other Stories, by Niccolò Tucci (*New Directions, $22.95*).

This is the multilingual Mr. Tucci's first collection in English. Most of the stories appeared here in the forties and fifties, and all of them have to do in some way or another with exile and with family life—either in Tuscany, where the author grew up, the fourth child of a scholarly Italian doctor and a Russian beauty, both displaced from a former life of wealth and ease, or in this country, to which Mr. Tucci emigrated just before the war, with a family of his own.

Worst Case Scenarios, by Jack Ziegler (*Fireside/Simon & Schuster, $7.95*).

Mr. Ziegler, artist and satirist, ever au courant, leaves few pomposities unpunctured, few fatuities unpinked. There are a hundred and sixty-two cartoons in this album, and ninety-four of them were ours.

The Continuous Life, by Mark Strand (*Knopf, $18.95*).

Mr. Strand is our nation's current Poet Laureate, and he proves again that his is poetry for all occasions: stately and ironic but filled with longing; sometimes comical; always musical. His first volume of poetry in ten years includes a surprise handful of prose poems.

The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Means of Ascent, by Robert A. Caro (*Knopf, $24.95*).

The second installment of this multi-volume biography covers the war years—during which L.B.J. earned a Silver Star for one much exaggerated flight in the Pacific, and began to amass a fortune in the communications industry—and then focusses on the devious campaign he waged against Coke Stevenson in the Texas senatorial primary of 1948. This race provides Mr. Caro with extensive evidence that Johnson's thirst for power was more than matched by the stupefying quantities of energy and ruthlessness he demonstrated in pursuit of it. Photographs.

The Predator, by Linda Grace Hoyer (*Ticknor & Fields, $15.95*).

An old woman, clear of mind and heart and brisk of manner, sorts through her memories and observations—of her late husband, of her grown son in New England, of her grandchildren—as she goes about her active life on a farm in Pennsylvania. We first meet her, at almost seventy, angrily mourning the murder of her favorite cat, and leave her, at eighty-four, in the office of her doctor.

A Miracle, a Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers, by Lawrence Weschler (*Pantheon, $22.95*).

In his foreword to this book about Brazil and Uruguay, Mr. Weschler asserts that when repressive regimes fall from power often "everyone knows who the torturers were and what they did, the torturers know that everyone knows, and everyone knows that they know," and he asks, "Why, then, this need to risk everything to render that knowledge explicit?" Yet many of the citizens of these two fragile democracies have placed their lives in jeopardy to make the truth a matter of public record. Mr. Weschler acknowledges both sides of the debate, and he considers the political and ethical sacrifices involved in coming to terms with the atrocities of the past.

Artists and Writers, by Sanford Schwartz (*Yarrow Press, $24.95*).

The artists discussed in these essays range from Caravaggio to Julian Schnabel, and the writers from Kleist to Clement Greenberg. Certain themes recur—the value and importance of texture, for example—but what holds the collection together is the precise angle of Mr. Schwa[illegible]'s approach, which is to describe not so much a particular painting or book as the act of looking at or reading it.

Family Sins, by William Trevor (*Viking, $18.95*).

A young couple on a package holiday to Ven[illegible] find themselves with a lot of old people in Switzerland instead; a woman meets, after many years, the father of her only child, at a tennis-club party in the Rhett Butler Room of the Tara Hotel. The backgrounds and characters of these wry stories are Irish unless otherwise specified.

Countenance of Truth: The United Nations and the Waldheim Case, by Shirley Hazzard (*Viking, $17.95*).

"When the United Nations was inaugurated," Ms. Hazzard writes, "it was not imagined as an entity with concerns other than the public good." The unchartered concerns are her subject here, beginning with Secretary-General Trygve Lie's acquiescence, in 1949, to a State Department directive that all American employees be subject to a national loyalty test. The criterion of national loyalty, she feels, has turned the Secretariat into a personnel dump for member governments, thereby creating a senior staff obsessed with pomp and perfectly willing to serve a Kurt Waldheim.

Lassie! Get Help!!, by Danny Shanahan (*Pantheon, $8.95*).

Surreal but sunny sketches of a pun-besotted universe where Chicken à la King is an Elvis look-alike and the bob-bobbin' robin wears a neck brace. Of a total of ninety-two amiably rumpled drawings in this collection, forty-two first appeared in these pages.

In Mysterious Ways: The Death and Life of a Parish Priest, by Paul Wilkes (*Random House, $19.95*).

Inspired by Bernanos' "Diary of a Country Priest," Mr. Wilkes has written a Profile of Father Joseph Greer, the pastor of a large parish in a Boston suburb, who discovered in 1986 that he had cancer. This book is at once a portrait of contemporary priesthood and an account of a determined man's effort to face his own mortality.

Sweet Talk, by Stephanie Vaughn (*Random House, $16.95*).

Ten stories, several of which make up a novella-like sequence about Gemma Jackson, an Army brat, and her coming of age in an era when the disciplined world of her officer father is collapsing and civilian life seems to offer only loss and uncertainty. The stories are spare and down-to-earth, yet they rise at times to a quiet lyricism.

A Neutral Corner, by A. J. Liebling (*North Point, $19.95*).

Fifteen pieces that were uncollected in Liebling's famous boxing dissertation, "The Sweet Science." Among the fighters making appearances here are Floyd Patterson, Ingemar Johansson, Archie Moore, and a young apprentice named Cassius Clay. As always in Liebling's researches, though, his real heroes are not the boxers in the ring but the Runyonesque characters he discovers in the demimonde just outside it.

The Tales of Arturo Vivante, edited and with an introduction by Mary Kinzie (*Sheep Meadow Press, $24.95*).

The Italian-born Mr. Vivante writes in a quizzical, gracefully proper English that suits his protagonists: from the Sienese boy who discovers his distaste for Fascism in gymnastics class to the middle-aged man who faults himself for being impatient with his slowly declining father, they hold themselves at that slight remove from daily intercourse which makes for clear observation.

An Open Adoption, by Lincoln Caplan (*Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $17.95*).

This blow-by-blow account of one "open adoption" is supplemented by a history of the fierce controversy surrounding the practice, in which natural and adoptive parents get to approve of each other in advance of a baby's birth. Mr. Caplan lets both supporters and detractors have their say, but more to the point is the story of the love affair between the young woman he calls Peggy and the people who are to become the parents of her child—a relationship that brings exhilaration, intimacy, and betrayal along the way.

The Woman Lit by Fireflies, by Jim Harrison (*Houghton Mifflin, $19.95*).

"We are heroes of reduced expectations, aren't we?" asks an ex-hippie turned international lawyer in one of the three novellas collected here, and he could be speaking for all of Mr. Harrison's tough-as-nails characters. In the title story a well-to-do Michigan matron walks away from her husband at a highway rest stop and into the embrace of a cornfield, where she boils creek water over a fire and reviews the griefs and hopes that have led her to leave her life behind.

Cuba: A Journey, by Jacobo Timerman (*Knopf, $18.95*).

The author of "Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number" describes his impressions of a 1987 trip through Cuba, whose revolution he has supported with increasing misgivings over the years, because of the Castro regime's abuse of human rights. Mr. Timerman has heady talks with intellectuals and writers but also offers rides to citizens along the road, and is disillusioned to find that nearly everyone he meets is passive, repressed, and mesmerized by El Comandante's cult of power.

When Life Falls It Falls Upside Down, by Lou Myers (*Grove Weidenfeld, $17.95*).

An autobiography of sorts, lightly disguised as a novel. Mr. Myers combines reminiscences of his childhood, as a poor boy in the Bronx, with accounts of visits to his indomitable (and incomparable) Ma at a Jewish home for the aged. Several chapters of the book first appeared here as short stories.

A Day in the Life of Roger Angell, by Roger Angell (*Penguin, $7.95*).

A sign on a Koren-designed blimp sailing across the cover of this reissue of Mr. Angell's 1970 collection of humor pieces proclaims it to be "new, improved, and expanded." What the reader may notice, however, is how little improvement has been necessary. Though written in the most perishable of genres—parody and nonsense, and even light verse—the pieces turn out to have plenty of shelf life left.

The Trick of It, by Michael Frayn (*Viking, $17.95*).

In this epistolary novella, a too-clever-by-half English academic falls for a famous female novelist who has long been the subject of his worshipful scholarship. As their vexed romance progresses—described by the academic in a series of unintentionally revealing letters to a colleague—he finds her genius increasingly, maddeningly, elusive: How has she mastered "the trick of it"? A sendup of critics' envy, by a practitioner of fictional sleight-of-hand.

Soviet Women: Walking the Tightrope, by Francine du Plessix Gray (*Doubleday, $19.95*).

The author travelled from Leningrad to Siberia, interviewing dozens of women—TV producers, academics, factory workers, scientists—about the conditions of their generally overburdened lives. She embroiders her account of these conversations with information on everything from the unavailability of adequate birth control to images of women in Tolstoy's fiction and the cult of the Virgin.

Mixed Company, by Michael Maslin (*Fireside/Simon & Schuster, $7.95*).

Mr. Maslin, eye and ear attuned to whatever is blowing in the wind, indoors and out, here presents an album of a hundred and fifty cartoons; eighty of them first ran in these pages.

Squabble, by John Holman (*Ticknor & Fields, $18.95*).

When confronted with the subject of racial harassment, one of Mr. Holman's black heroines declares, "Never happened to me. I don't have time for it." Verbal audacity, or the lack of it, is what makes or breaks the characters in these eleven stories: those who thrive enter into the "squabble" of everyday communication with their wits about them, ready to joke or feint or lie outright when necessary.

Friend of My Youth, by Alice Munro (*Knopf, $18.95*).

As Ms. Munro shuttles from present to distant past, with pauses at crucial points in between, and from one part of Canada to another, the characters woven into these stories take on more and more definition and complexity: a husband turns out not only to fear that his wife is dying but to hope that she is; a woman apparently of great virtue darkens before our eyes into a "Presbyterian witch," poisoned by repression, and then appears before us one more time in a light that is more kindly; an acknowledgment of love brings as much bitterness as comfort.

Canal Street, by Ian Frazier and Saul Steinberg (*The Library Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art, $900*).

This sumptuous limited edition—a hundred copies are available to the public—contains sixteen drawings and two original woodcuts by the indomitable Mr. Steinberg, whose vision of Canal Street yields both the spare black-and-white of an empty studio and the clamorous color of a street teeming with traffic. Mr. Frazier's text also looks at Canal from idiosyncratic angles: he recounts his funky adventures as a resident there in the seventies and eighties, and supplies the tale of Clifford Holland, the diffident hell-of-an-engineer who worked practically until the day he died to build the Holland Tunnel and connect us to New Jersey.

E. B. White: Writings from The New Yorker 1927–1976, edited by Rebecca M. Dale (*HarperCollins, $20*).

A few casuals and ringing obituaries aside, this book brings together over a hundred and fifty previously uncollected Notes and Comment pieces, by the man who invented the form and brought to it such a shine. Large concerns (liberty, the Constitution, academic freedom, the language) are taken up at times, but the lesser paragraphs convey news of a city and a citizen made for each other, and preserve a kind of writing that has outlasted Lindbergh and the El and the *Herald Tribune*, and perhaps New York itself.

The New Yorker Book of Cat Cartoons (*Knopf, $16.95*).

A selection of a hundred and one drawings that have appeared in our pages over the past sixty-five years. Fashions change, and so do the eyes of beholders; cats, rampant or couchant, do not.

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BOOKS

Childhoods

RUSSIAN childhoods were once as distinct and as overfilled with light as Russian summers. Vladimir Nabokov attributed the special Russian genius for hoarding images of childhood to a gift bestowed by a compensating destiny on members of his generation, whose young world was to be destroyed in all but memory. But Russian literature has always had a special bond with childhood, and the origins of the genius that Nabokov observed and displayed can be seen a few generations earlier: in a reading public obsessed with David Copperfield and little Paul Dombey, seizing upon the serials as soon as they could be translated; in a culture tearing headlong out of its medieval past and proceeding directly—without benefit of Western Renaissance or Reformation—to the newly imported ideas of French and English Romanticism, and taking over the cult of childhood innocence from Rousseau and from Dickens at the very moment that its own richest literature was in the process of invention. (When the ancient Countess in Pushkin's "Queen of Spades" is asked if she wouldn't like to read a Russian novel, she replies wonderingly, "Are there such things?") The very habits of language by which Russians address and define one another—the ever-attendant patronymic and the plethora of untranslatable endearing diminutives—suggest a particular sense of honor in regard to familial concerns and a special tenderness toward them.

Leo Tolstoy was twenty-four when his first story, "Childhood," was published, in the leading literary journal of the day. He was offended by the editor's retitling of his fiction as "A History of My Childhood"; it was to be part of a novel, he complained—not a mere record, but art. Through the sensual bedazzlement of Tolstoy's perceptions and through his quick interior life, an era is captured—with its country houses and its carpets on the grass and its samovars packed in straw and trundled out for picnics—just as that era's final ripeness is captured, almost a century later, in Nabokov's "Speak, Memory." But, apart from the few masterpieces by those whose genius just begins with their powers of recollection, there is an expanding shelf of works that aim precisely at the firm and untranscendent truth of record, at the simple and often powerful assertion of existence and loss, as those who remember spread their own faded family rugs across the ample lawns of pre-Soviet Russian history. In such memoirs, the extraordinary quality comes less from the tone of the recording voice than from the location of the speaker: a place where no one stands any longer. Books with titles like "A World Can End" and "Twice Born in Russia" were familiar here in the thirties, and we are now being offered their descendants—through the literary grandchildren of those early émigré authors—in such rhapsodic family chronicles as Michael Ignatieff's "The Russian Album" and Alex Shoumatoff's "Russian Blood." As the last living witnesses slip away, the world of a confident European Russia, so nearly attained in the years preceding the Great War and the revolution, seems ever more poignant and lyric and bright, a cultural summer solstice based on an unrepeatable and frequently idealized conjunction of the progressive and enlightened with the unfailingly picturesque.

Two firsthand memoirs have recently emerged from a little-charted point within that world, providing witness that is pungent in its freshness and altogether startling in its immediacy. Leonid Andreyev's "Photographs by a Russian Writer" (Thames & Hudson; $35), an album of almost unknown images strung on a slender text, and Lydia Chukovskaya's autobiographical "To the Memory of Childhood" (Northwestern; $24.95) are complementary works. The authors were neighbors long ago, in a community of country dachas on the Gulf of Finland just thirty miles from St. Petersburg, in what was then the Grand Duchy of Finland, an imperial domain with a relatively independent and liberal set of laws. There artists and writers could work and live, involved in the activity of the nearby capital yet unencumbered by the harsh restrictions of its censorship. It was in this sea-salted Russian Bloomsbury, created during the first decade of the century and lasting until 1917, that Chaliapin came to sit for his portrait by Ilya Repin, the master realist whose famed estate, Penates, was a centerpiece of local society, and that Maxim Gorky came to read from a new and incendiary play, and that Mayakovsky came to shout verses of liberation against the gentle pulsing of the waves. It was there—amid salons and concerts and garden theatricals, in houses brimming with the variegated guests of a limitless hospitality—that Leonid Andreyev lived out his fame and his dolor, while Lydia Chukovskaya, the daughter of his friend the esteemed critic Kornei Chukovsky, grew up alert and berry-stained, stuffed to bursting with poetry and little-girl happiness.

Few traces are left of Leonid Andreyev's renown. To say that he was as highly regarded as Gorky may not mean much in America today, when even Gorky's name is identified primarily with the dreary provincial city to which Andrei Sakharov was exiled, instead of with the founder of socialist realism, for whom Stalin had the city renamed. (For Gorky's many literary and political enemies, this new equation can only be a sweet—if posthumous—revenge.) During the early years of the century, Gorky and Andreyev, as proponents of an unabashed back-alley realism, were close friends and two of the most widely read writers in Russia. The slightly older and better-established Gorky played the role of mentor. Published letters between the two reveal him as a Pound-like pedagogue, generous, and crackling with an antic brilliance—who instructed Andreyev in how to end a story and exhorted him, against increasing resistance, to social and political engagement.

Andreyev, as a member of the liberal intelligentsia, believed in reform, and even in revolution (but "not the revolutionism that is required by the moment," he wrote to Gorky), and his politically minded writing remains his strongest. The only one of his stories still occasionally anthologized in English, "The Seven Who Were Hanged," is a dramatic condemnation of capital punishment, inspired by and dedicated to Tolstoy, powerful and entirely undated. But Andreyev had personal preoccupations: questions of madness and sanity, of alcoholism, and, especially, of sex and sexual pathology. "Write a good story, without venereal diseases, if it's not too hard for you," Gorky appealed in 1903. It was through his psychological horror stories on such themes—part corrupted and Russified Nietzsche and part Edgar Allan Poe—that Andreyev became what a 1908 article in the *Times* called "Russia's most popular writer today." Those explorations carried him far from public-spirited realism, and from Gorky.

Andreyev's works for the stage were also very successful—particularly his play "The Life of Man," directed by Stanislavsky at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1907. There, in a blanketing surround of black velvet, the cycle of life was played out by abstract characters with names like Man and Someone in Gray; the latter passed through the proceedings with a lighted candle, commenting on the vanity of human life. That Chekhov, years before, had already found Andreyev's work to be pretentious and false does not surprise, given the degree to which "The Life of Man" resembles the little dramaless drama that young Konstantin Trepliov puts on for his mother and her guests at the beginning of "The Seagull." ("It is deserted, deserted, deserted. . . . It is terrifying, terrifying, terrifying.") What is striking is that Chekhov's parody of the genre ("This sounds like the Decadent school," hisses Mme. Arkadina) was performed a decade before Andreyev's full-blown and entirely unironic success.

It is no wonder that this and other works like it, in their woozy symbolism and their gross popularity, were soon reviled by a new generation, eager to head off in contrary directions. In 1912, Mayakovsky inveighed against the "filthy slime of the books written by all those innumerable Leonid Andreyevs"; the poet's censure loses something in discriminating force, however, when his list of writers to be jettisoned is extended to Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevski. Osip Mandelstam's words are more considered and more deadly: Andreyev's was work without life and without music, he wrote, yet "there was not a single house where the dull polka from 'The Life of Man,' which had become a symbol of vulgar tawdry symbolism, was not picked out with one finger on the piano." His general popularity was undiminished, however; the play "He Who Gets Slapped," of 1915, carried his fame to the West.

THE posturing and grandiloquence that afflicted Andreyev's literary production became in his life components of a lordly and seductive charm. He was a handsome man, tall and with

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dark hair worn long, who favored a velvet waistcoat and a flowing cravat and a look of tragical secrets. In a freely brushed portrait by Repin, he appears the very image of the Byronic Onegin. The actor who played the role of Man in Andreyev's drama at the Moscow Art Theatre described the author's effect on people around him as having "something of a tenor's success in it: female admirers, love letters, flowers, assignations," and suggested that the fire in the burning black eyes was often of alcoholic origin. A far more sympathetic account, even a loving one, has been left by Kornei Chukovsky, who was responsible for a modest revival of Andreyev's works in the Soviet Union in the nineteen-sixties. Chukovsky describes a man of hyperbolic energy and expression, one who could never bear second place (even at skittles), and who was "born to walk at the head of a magnificent procession, lit by torches, and with bells ringing." Aside from his writing, Andreyev fervently practiced several subsidiary occupations: he was for a time a painter (Goya-obsessed, he copied *the famous engravings on a grand* scale); he was an experienced sailor; and he was a collector of gramophones ("It was as if he had fallen ill with gramophones," Chukovsky notes). And then there was his passion for photography.

In 1908, Andreyev built an enormous wooden house in a fanciful Gothic-Finnish idiom in Vammelsuu, Finland, by the Black River, on the gulf. Writing to Gorky that he expected "once for all to come face to face with nature" and "with pure human thought," he moved into its palatial gloom with his second wife, an assortment of children, and a sizable staff. The photographs that he took of his family and friends in this place during the next few years are the substance of "Photographs by a Russian Writer," which was assembled by the Andreyev scholar Richard Davies and has a foreword by Olga Andreyev Carlisle, the author's granddaughter and most eloquent champion. A scattering of Andreyev's photographs has appeared before, as accompaniment to a collection of his stories published under the title "Visions," in 1987; marginal to the purpose, they were poorly reproduced, in small-format black-and-white. What makes Andreyev's photographic documents remarkable, as we have a number of them now splendidly set out—what makes them uncanny and a bit disquieting—is that they were taken in color.

One of the legacies of the advent of photography is our tendency to visualize whole periods of history—both World Wars, for example—in black-and-white. In such realms, color seems artificial, superadded: inauthentic. This impression, perhaps derives from the earliest associations of color in photography, when paint was applie[illegible]o dress up a subject, or even to provide alternative versions of a photograph's "reality." Roland Barthes, whose philosophy of photography—heartf[illegible], gnostic—sprang from the loss of his adored mother, treasured photographs of the dead woman for their almost shamanistic value, as a kind of literal transcription of the light that emanated, directly and physically, from her living hair, her skin, her dress. Through these feelings he arrived at an unsurpassable definition of photography—as the place where Death went when religion let it go. For Barthes, color in a photograph could be no more than a cosmetic applied to an underlying truth, "like the kind used to paint corpses."

The autochrome process used by Andreyev had become available only in 1907. Developed by the Lumière brothers in France, it relied on grains of potato starch dyed in the primary colors and spread as a fine powder across the photographic plate, the grains acting as delicate and subtle color filters. The positive image that resulted was the glass plate itself. When the plate is held to the light or looked at through a viewer, or when it is turned into prints, as Andreyev's plates have been for this book, the surface of the image has a textured, Seurat-like graininess, especially well-suited to the dappled, the stippled, the radiantly diffuse. Or to allowi[illegible] things to appear that way.

Yet these early color photographs can make us uncomfortable; they seem to violate the conventions of memory. The discomfort is due in part to their sheer unlikeliness, of course, and to the suspicion, aroused by our modern experience, that these may really be actors playing historical roles, as in a movie. But it is also due to our awareness of what might be termed the hierarchical place of color in photography. One's own snapshots of Paris are almost cer-

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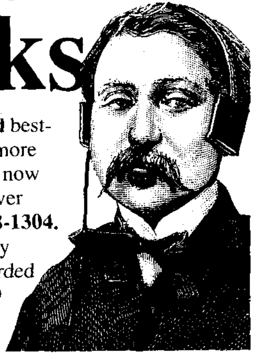

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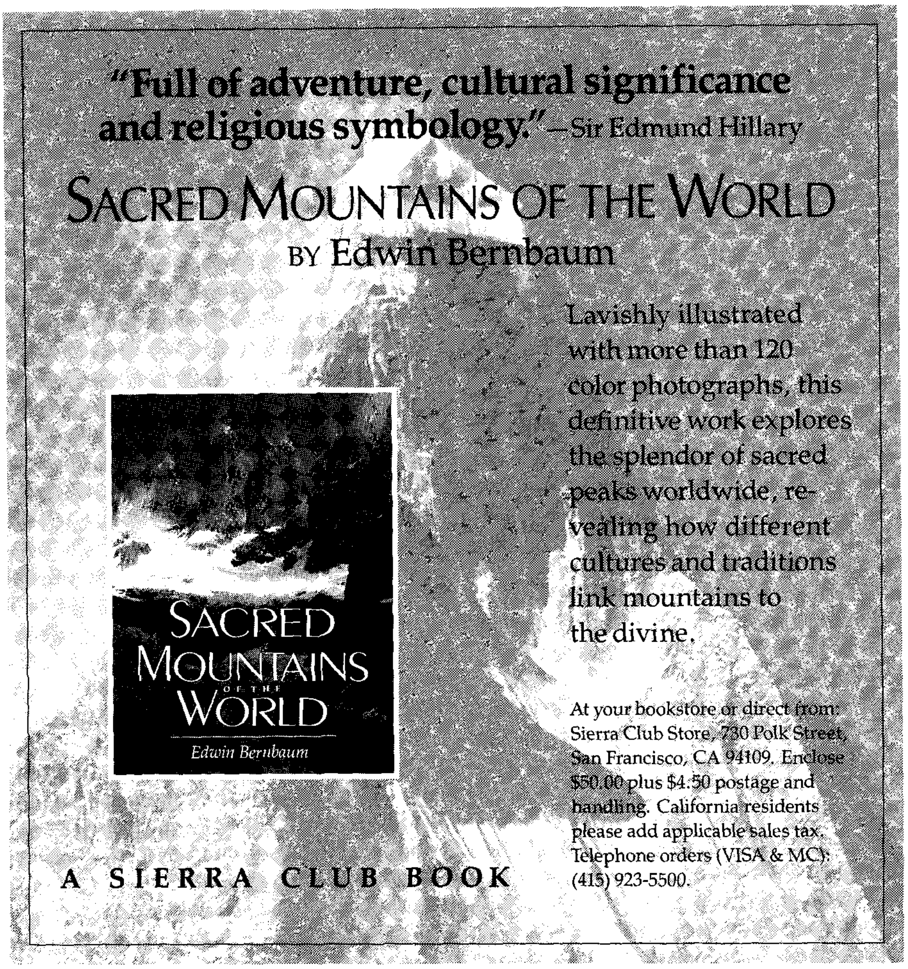
tainly in color, but Atget's are not; and, more to the point—for now deliberation and choice are introduced—Cartier-Bresson's are not. Black-and-white photography in the twentieth century has taken on the classical prestige of white marble sculpture: it manifests the purity of form, set apart from all the high-color ex-votos of modern advertising and from the trivialities of amateurism. Andreyev's landscapes and family portraits are based on the genteel decorum of late-nineteenth-century categories of painting (what other ideal could he have had?), and when Chukovsky likened the photographs to works of a contemporary landscape painter ("It was hard to believe that they were photographs") he intended high praise. Yet these images may strike us, their first public audience, as so stripped of any abstracting or consoling art as to be almost unbearably naked. Their very aliveness seems an added affliction, intensifying the pathos of these people's position in time, which encompasses both the common lot of individual mortality and the broad historical annihilation of their calm, privileged days. Even the green grass makes us wince.

One of the founders of photography, William Henry Fox Talbot, spoke as early as the eighteen-thirties of the camera's power to reveal "the injuries of time," and Barthes had something like that in mind when he wrote that every great photograph contains a wound. Andreyev's photographs all have the inherent fascination of their epoch, but those which supersede curiosity and nostalgia and touch something deeper are indeed those which betray a wound: the photographs of his children.

Few smiles are offered to this camera. It is tempting to observe, from the evidence of these disconnected figures, that all happy families photograph alike, while every unhappy family photographs in its own way. Andreyev himself broods distractedly, as though playing the role of Man in his own personal drama (his perpetual *air pathétique* takes on an added resonance when one envisions him setting up the shot and then sprinting to the front to take his place, expression at the ready); his wife, Anna, thick and soft, a handsome peasant odalisque coached in mystery, stares out into space. Only Andreyev's sons—the two older sons, that is, at ages that seem to be roughly



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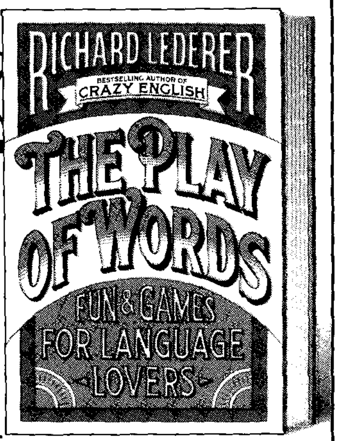
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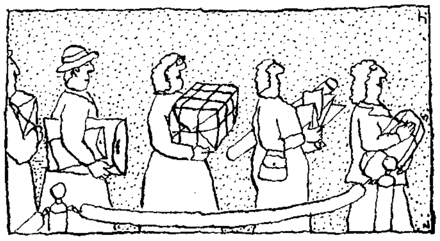
ten and six years—look into the eye of the camera hard, as though pressing some communication upon the viewer. The smaller of the boys, Daniil, is seen in two photographs apparently taken on the same day: pale and pinched, he stares out from under a starchless white hat that dwarfs his head and droops over his ears like an enormous crêpe. One of the photographs is a portrait, and the camera looks close into his face. In the other, he has been propped on a table and posed, doll-like, with hand to hip, while nearby—making no contact—his father sits staring down at nothing, and another male relative regards the lens grumpily. The child's glance is the same in both photographs: even, direct, morose.

Daniil, as the text informs us, is visiting his father; he has never lived with him, and even a visit is a rare event. Andreyev's first wife, Daniil's mother—"my lost Lenore," Andreyev called her—died of puerperal fever after the boy's birth, in 1906, and Daniil was sent off to be brought up by her family in Moscow. It seems that Andreyev could hardly bear the sight of the boy. Daniil's older brother, Vadim, was not sent away, but he grew up something of a stranger in his father's household. Throughout his childhood, Vadim wrote years later, his father existed for him "as a transparent and insurmountable wall," while "for him I almost completely ceased to exist, it was as if he did not notice me or my efforts to approach him." Andreyev's paternal devotion was reserved for the son born of Anna, in 1909, and for that misappropriation of affection the young Vadim blamed Anna, whose very presence he came to find intolerable. "I became gloomy and resentful," he went on, "and, without understanding it myself, turned into a stepson." The photographs of Vadim, a hungry and proud young prince, are the treasures of this book. He sits, small and elegant, on various pieces of vastly oversized furniture—Andreyev's house was stocked with potential thrones—and commands our attention by default, as it were, while he seeks to command that of the father standing behind the camera, examining the light and adjusting the frame, recording the gaze that he could not meet.

LYDIA CHUKOVSKAYA remembers Leonid Andreyev in the aspect of a sea captain, coming ashore from the launch of his yacht on the shallow beach in front of her house, in the village of Kuokkala. What she remembers more vividly, though, are the caps and gold ribbons of his sailor crew: Chukovskaya has tried to preserve the memories of her childhood—the years in Finland, from about 1910, when she was three, until 1917—uncorrected by adult notions of importance. Her story, too, draws its deep energy from the relation between a father and his children, but openly so, as tribute and celebration. "I am writing about my childhood, and he was its creator," she explains. This small book is the product of a great devotion. Nearly artless itself, it is a rare record of the artistry of parenthood.

Kornei Chukovsky was a self-educated man, an illegitimate child spurned by his father and reared by a struggling mother in Odessa, where his status kept him out of the upper levels of school—they were off limits to the category of "cooks' children" (his mother was actually a laundress)—and where the daily humiliations of life made him resolve on something better. As has happened with so many sensitive and suffering children, literature became his better life, his real life. He taught himself English, and on his first trip to London, in 1904, as a newspaper correspondent, he caught up on his education in the British Museum library. "I sit at my books in a frenzy," he wrote home to his wife. Later on, literature was the kingdom in which he brought up his children.

At the time of these recollections, Chukovsky was a much admired and somewhat feared critic of poetry, with a reputation for sharpness of insight and opinion which suggests a young Russian Randall Jarrell. Although he had not yet fully embarked on his second career, as a writer for and about children, he was a natural teacher. His daughter's book is without drama, and scant even of incident, but it is filled with literary quotations: growing up was a matter of what one read, and to whom one read it. The proudest task of Chukovskaya's youth was to read aloud, for hours at a time, in order to lull her insomniac father to sleep. (Russian writers, as a rule, seem to sleep poorly.) A standard evening's fare consisted of a Walter Scott ballad as a curtain-raiser, and then a good chunk of "Dombey and Son" (several paragraphs of which are here rendered in a curious back-translation from the Russian). When success struck, she would snuff the candle and creep from the room, reciting all the while—from memory, or from a fancy strictly trained in imitative metre—so that no abrupt silence would undo her achievement.



Life in Kuokkala served continually as an occasion for poetry, and poetry was something not to be experienced in silence but to be shared, recited, sung. The cadences of the sea were its frequent counterpoint: rowing hard or just drifting along, Chukovsky would speak out the poems to his children, never explaining the big words but always identifying the author, even if that was only another big unexplained word—Baratynsky, Nekrasov—hoping and expecting that the special sounds would in themselves make a difference in the way the children heard and the way they thought. Although the verse excerpted here is declamatory and orotund, of a sort that is hardly recognized nowadays even as poetry, what Chukovskaya makes wonderfully apparent, in her unadorned prose (the translation, by Eliza Kellogg Klose, has a pleasing ring of old-fashioned locution and distance), is her own heady reaction to this intoxicating mixture of melodic sound and filial love.

Chukovsky's children were nearly grown when he incorporated his methods of instructing and enlightening them into one of the classics of Russian childhood education, which was published in English in the nineteen-sixties (in an abridged translation much disliked by the author) as "From Two to Five." The title marks the ages between which "every child becomes for a short period of time a linguistic genius," Chukovsky writes—a time before the homogenizing rules of language are too well learned. For the romantic roots of what is today a familiar premise, one need only think of Sainte-Beuve: "There exists in most men a poet who died young, whom the man survives." Chukovsky, however, was after something more practical than metaphoric. Throughout his life, he was professionally concerned with what his daughter describes as the building of a literary staircase for children to climb, starting with the simplest songs and rising toward the cloudy heights of Pushkin. He worried that the children of Russia, the new generations just coming to literacy in the years since the abolition of serfdom, would be unable, unassisted, to grow into their heritage. What would become of his cherished books when there was no one to cherish them? It was for poetry's sake, then, that childhood was rendered sacrosanct for Chukovsky, and that Lydia's big brother Kolya could rebuff her with "Get out of here, don't you see I'm dreaming," and know that dreaming was a respected activity in his father's house.

Chukovsky's confidence in the power of literature to enlarge the moral scope of human nature determined the steady course of his life. Although that confidence ties him to the great nineteenth-century Russian tradition of the writer as educator, the manner in which he held to it in our own century makes him an anomaly: a man who trod a middle path where one hardly seemed to exist. Chukovskaya's account of her father's life is limited to the bountiful years of her childhood, with bare hints of its post-revolutionary aftermath. Andreyev's book of photographs ends at the same historical moment. These men who shared so much went on to cross the historical chasm and redefine their lives in ways that delineate the range and complexities of heroism, public and private, as summoned up by Russian writers in Soviet times.

AFTER 1917, Russian literary culture split, in its first and most essential permutation, into those who stayed and those who left. In the brutally frank terms that would be clarified in just a few years, the choices available were three: expatriation, accommodation, and martyrdom. In "Petrograd, 1919," Anna Akhmatova wrote with determination of staying in "this savage capital," of loving her city "and not winged freedom," of preserving "its palaces, its fire and water." In 1922, already a victim of the first of many denunciations, she could write again, "I am not with those who abandoned their land," and, with grim pride, "We have not deflected from ourselves / One single stroke." For

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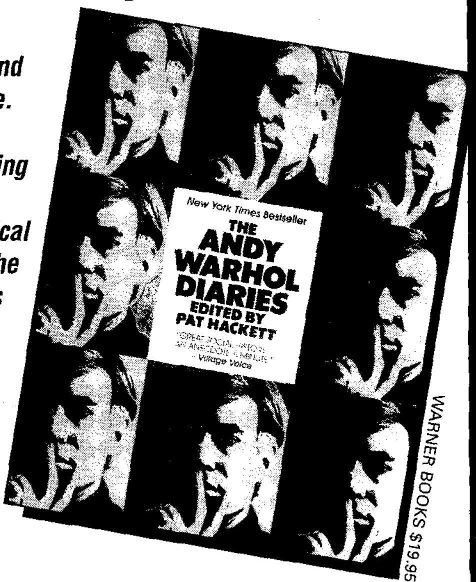

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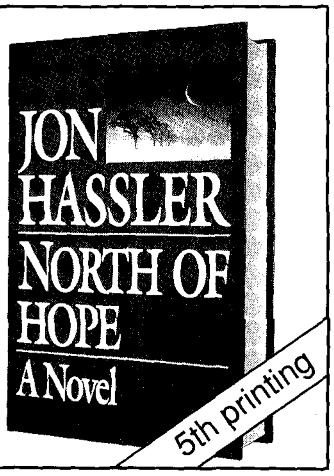

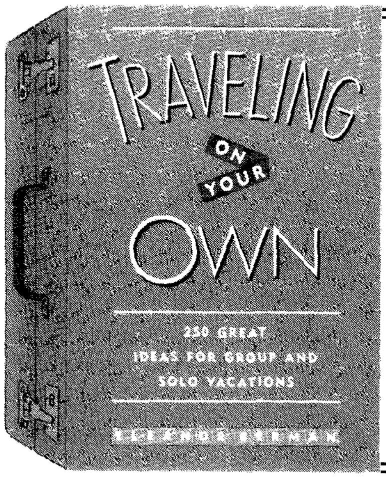

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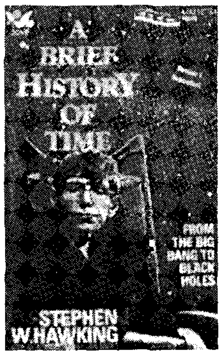

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the next thirteen years, she wrote little, and from 1925 until 1940 she was allowed to publish virtually nothing. In those years, Russian writers gained another option, which Isaac Babel called (and what other culture has known a humor black enough to name it?) the genre of silence. Elsewhere, far from silence, Vladimir Nabokov, the quintessential exile, the proud citizen of Wellesley, Cornell, and Montreux, claimed to treasure the "syncopal kick" that the revolution had caused in his life. For Nabokov, writing in the late nineteen-forties, those who had remained in Russia "were either withering away there or adulterating their gifts by complying with the political demands of the state."

In the first decade of this century, both Chukovsky and Andreyev were arrested, briefly, on charges of activity against the czar: Andreyev for allowing a meeting of the Social Democrats—Gorky's party, and Lenin's—to occur in his apartment; Chukovsky for an anti-czarist poem in a satirical journal that he edited. (When, in "The Gulag Archipelago," the mild sentences of czarist jurisprudence are contrasted with the brutality of Bolshevik and Stalinist punishments, Solzhenitsyn cites Andreyev's taunt that his fifteen days in prison had been too short, and that as far as board and lodging were concerned he had lived better in jail than as a student.) Although neither writer maintained a party affiliation, each remained committed to principles of reform. Andreyev, especially, was a vociferous supporter of the February revolution. And then, with the coming of October, the two friends made the opposite choices of their time. Packed up for good and moving swiftly east or west, they nearly passed each other as the border between the new Soviet and Finnish states came crashing down.

Andreyev went to Finland. Cut off there from the new Russia, he camped out in the huge, cold house in Vammelsuu, the elaborate tiled stoves mostly untended, the money—he had spent it as lavishly as he had made it—running out. Surrounded by civil war, he and his family moved, retreating ever farther north. In failing health, he kept writing. There is a late novel called "Satan's Diary" in which, despite his situation, he gives the Devil the form of a genial American billionaire, Mr. Henry Wondergood, who sports a cigar and gold teeth and an "Illinois soul." And there is, at last, one urgently political work—his final word on the revolutionism of the moment—which, in its pure, desperate desire to communicate, succeeds in burning off the stylistic vapors that so beclouded what he had come to think of as literature. (It should be noted, however, that the edited British and American translations differ considerably in this respect.) "S.O.S.—Save Our Souls" is neither a story nor a play but a tract, a plea, an open letter to the Allies, written specifically for the populations of Britain and the United States in the early months of 1919. After more than a year of governance by "these savages who have revolted against culture, law and the code of human morals," Andreyev attests, only the willfully blind could not see "the murders, the destruction, the graveyards, the prisons, the lunatic asylums" of Bolshevik rule. These acts must not be allowed to pass as "internal affairs," he continues. If Woodrow Wilson is able to dine in Paris now, it is because of the protection afforded him by two oceans: "the Atlantic and the ocean of Russian blood shed in defense of the common cause of the Allies." The revolution in Russia, Andreyev writes, has already been strangled. "As a wireless telegrapher on a sinking ship sends out in the darkness of night his last call: 'Help, Quick, We Sink, Help!' so do I, firm in my belief in man, send out into space and darkness my call." The final words of this extraordinary document are "Help Us! Quick! Come Quick!" Andreyev died in September, 1919, while planning a trip to the United States to raise money for the anti-Bolshevik cause.

Chukovsky, in the meantime, shuttered his house on the gulf and brought his family to their new citizenship in the city that would soon be Leningrad. He retreated to translating—as did so many others—and to writing children's verse; he confined his literary criticism to works of the nineteenth century. By such means he kept out of political harm's way. There was no outright accommodation—no official positions promulgated, no false literary pretenses—nor was there outright opposition. He was, on occasion, inadvertently subversive: his poem about a tyrannical cockroach, a little moral comedy written for children in 1923, took on a new appeal for parents in the thirties, owing to the detail of the insect's flamboyant mustaches. And Isaiah Berlin, who met Chukovsky in the nineteen-forties, testifies to an episode of personal courage, when Chukovsky took him to meet Pasternak. There were likely many such private displays of ethical gallantry, reflective of his character and essential to his pride. By the time of the cultural thaw, under Khrushchev, Chukovsky was recognized as a grand old man, his integrity uncompromised by any kowtowing to the régime. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, in 1962, he received both an honorary degree from Oxford and the Lenin Prize.

In the last decade or so of his life—he died in 1969—the new atmosphere of dissent inspired Chukovsky to speak out, to take a stand for contemporary and controversial writers. Godfather to a new generation, he embraced Pasternak publicly when the Nobel Prize had made him a pariah in official literary circles and Chukovsky's own son Nikolai (Kolya the dreamer!) had taken part in the unanimous vote to expel Pasternak from the Writers Union. To Solzhenitsyn he offered his home, such money as he could contrive to press upon the hounded novelist (mostly through a benefice in his will), and full, ecstatic faith in the living continuity of Russian literary genius.

According to Solzhenitsyn's biographer, Michael Scammell, Chukovsky survived Stalinism "physically intact and morally uncompromised." One wonders what Chukovsky would have said to that. Olga Andreyev Carlisle, who visited him several times in his late years, reports that he kept a big stuffed lion, sent as a gift from America, which when its tail was pulled spoke in a deep voice—in what sounded to Carlisle like a New York accent. It said, "I am the Cowardly Lion," and then something unintelligible. Chukovsky would pull the tail whenever he had a question or a problem, and listen and nod gravely and pretend to divine his answer there. Perhaps this was just a charming affectation, or perhaps it was a modest but relentlessly punishing goad.

Nadezhda Mandelstam's two overmastering memoirs of the life of letters under Stalin, published here in the early nineteen-seventies, have directed shafts of moral light into the caves of fear and death, and elucidated the virtual impossibility of unimpaired moral and physical survival. The authority of her vision, at once implacable and pitying, has rendered her akin to a prophetess and a judge of that blacked-out past. She reproaches Chukovsky with a single, venial sin: the fabrication of a story, long after the fact, "designed to whitewash Gorky." The story itself—that Gorky had raced from Petrograd to Moscow in an attempt to obtain Lenin's veto of the secret police's planned execution of the poet Nikolai Gumilev, in 1921, and had returned victorious but too late—has been reported elsewhere. A detail unique to Chukovsky's version, in Mme. Mandelstam's recounting, has Gorky so distraught at Gumilev's death that he began to cough up blood. Considering what is known about the state of Gorky's lungs and of his psyche at the time—Lenin soon sent him out of Russia to recuperate on both counts—the story is not incredible. Gorky had made a devil's pact at least in part to help control the flames; he is credited with saving many lives. What matters in this instance, however, is that Nadezhda Mandelstam is convinced not only that this is all a lie—that Gorky did nothing to save Gumilev—but that Chukovsky knew it to be a lie even as he perpetrated the story.

To gauge by her memoirs, Mme. Mandelstam did not know Chukovsky well; at one point, she seems to confuse him with his son Nikolai. Yet the reason asserted for such moral trespass as she detects in him is psychologically acute. In falsifying scraps of heroism and humanity for the sake of a powerful writer, she finds, Chukovsky was acting in the name of a larger belief; that is, nothing less than the "good name of literature," the necessity of maintaining its cult and its honor. For Nadezhda Mandelstam, literature stood so far disgraced—no one had risen up to save Gumilev, as no one in 1938 rose up to save Osip Mandelstam, her husband and the sovereign poet of the age—that an attempt of that kind could only be useless.

Chukovsky maintained his faith in moral regeneration by keeping his eyes on the nation's children. At a time when Marxism in Russia had shifted the ideal of the originally sinless from

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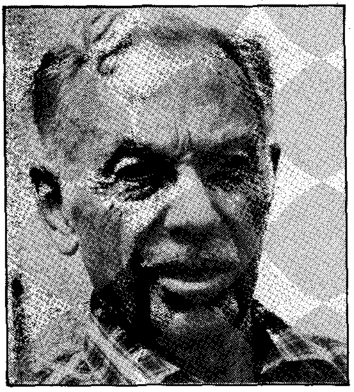
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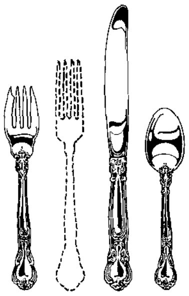

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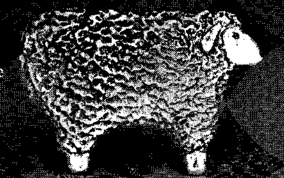
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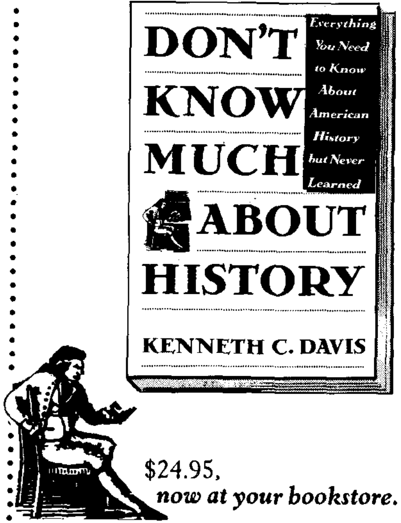
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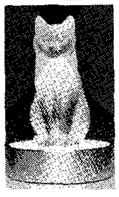

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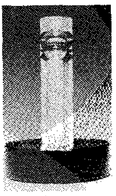

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the child to the worker, he maintained a Dickensian notion—essentially apolitical—of reform through the proper education of innocence. "Doesn't the very color of a person's eye and the shape of his lip change after he has read 'War and Peace'?" he asked. Nadezhda Mandelstam, whose survival and life's purpose bear knowing testament to the redemptive power of literature, possessed a political intelligence and a fund of experience that would not allow her to generalize from the achievement of individual salvation to that of any system that men might invent. "I found it astonishing that the English, after reading about young Arthur and the way he softened the hearts of his executioners, had not given up killing their fellow-men forever," she writes about reading "King John"—for comfort—in the months after Osip Mandelstam's second and final arrest. A friend suggests to her that people went on murdering even after Shakespeare—the formulation is very like one of Chukovsky's—because they had not seen this play. Her response seems to issue from poetry itself, grieving for history: "At nights I wept at the thought that executioners never read what might soften their hearts. It still makes me weep."

THE coastline strip of Finland that, in the words of Ilya Repin, had once served as essential "fresh air" for the Russian intelligentsia became Russian territory again during the Second World War. The village of Kuokkala was renamed Repino, after its most famous resident. The old spirit of the place—the pursuit of fresh air, one might call it—survived in the destinies of the children who had grown up there. Kornei Chukovsky could have done little to save Solzhenitsyn or his works had it not been for Vadim Andreyev, the dark princeling of his father's photographs, grown to manhood in Paris, where Anna had resettled her family in the early nineteen-twenties. Vadim, who felt his unchosen exile as a lifelong blow, had fought to regain his citizenship—to the undoubted eternal mortification of his father's ghost—and travelled freely across Soviet borders from the late nineteen-fifties. On two visits, in 1964 and 1968, this trusted guest of the state took the opportunity of his unmonitored departures to slip several rolls of microfilm into a raincoat pocket and carry them to the West; they contained the manuscripts of "The First Circle" and "The Gulag Archipelago."

The family fates that separated Vadim from his younger brother, Daniil, made a different sort of literary and political footnote out of that woebegone child. Daniil grew up in the Soviet Union with rather fewer sympathies for it than were felt by the outsider Vadim. A writer, he was tried in 1949 for reading from his work to a group of friends, and was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. The novelist Andrei Bitov reports the rumor of "an important book" written by Daniil in prison camp—"a great systematic spiritual construct, an edifice of Existence"—unpublished, and populated with literary heroes.

As for Lydia Chukovskaya, she has been for decades one of the Soviet Union's boldest voices against censorship and intellectual persecution. Her novel "Sofia Petrovna," written and hidden at the end of the thirties—when her husband was seized and executed—is a brittle, plainspoken story, almost a parable, of one of the innumerable women who waited, day after day, in the long lines around Stalin's prisons, seeking news of husbands or sons. The helpless mother, once a model citizen, grows deranged with fear and fatigue and confusion; the letter that finally arrives from her son pleads for a courage that is beyond her strength, and all she can do is to burn it. The book itself seems written in ash.

The summer gardens of Russian childhood were forcibly depopulated a lifetime ago. Is being torn from beauty a worse fate—or one more deserving of attention—than never having had any? In a sense, all that happened to those dispossessed children is that they joined the multitude of others outside the gates. The most arresting moment in Michael Ignatieff's noble "Russian Album" comes when his grandmother, born a princess, insists that the soldiers who are removing the family's belongings leave at least her children's shoes. The citizeness did not understand, came the response of one of the ragged and hungry soldiers; his own children had never *had* any shoes. It is only in the glow of retrospect and of art that the gardens belong to us all.

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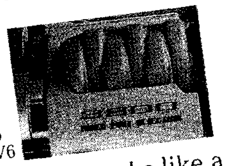

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